

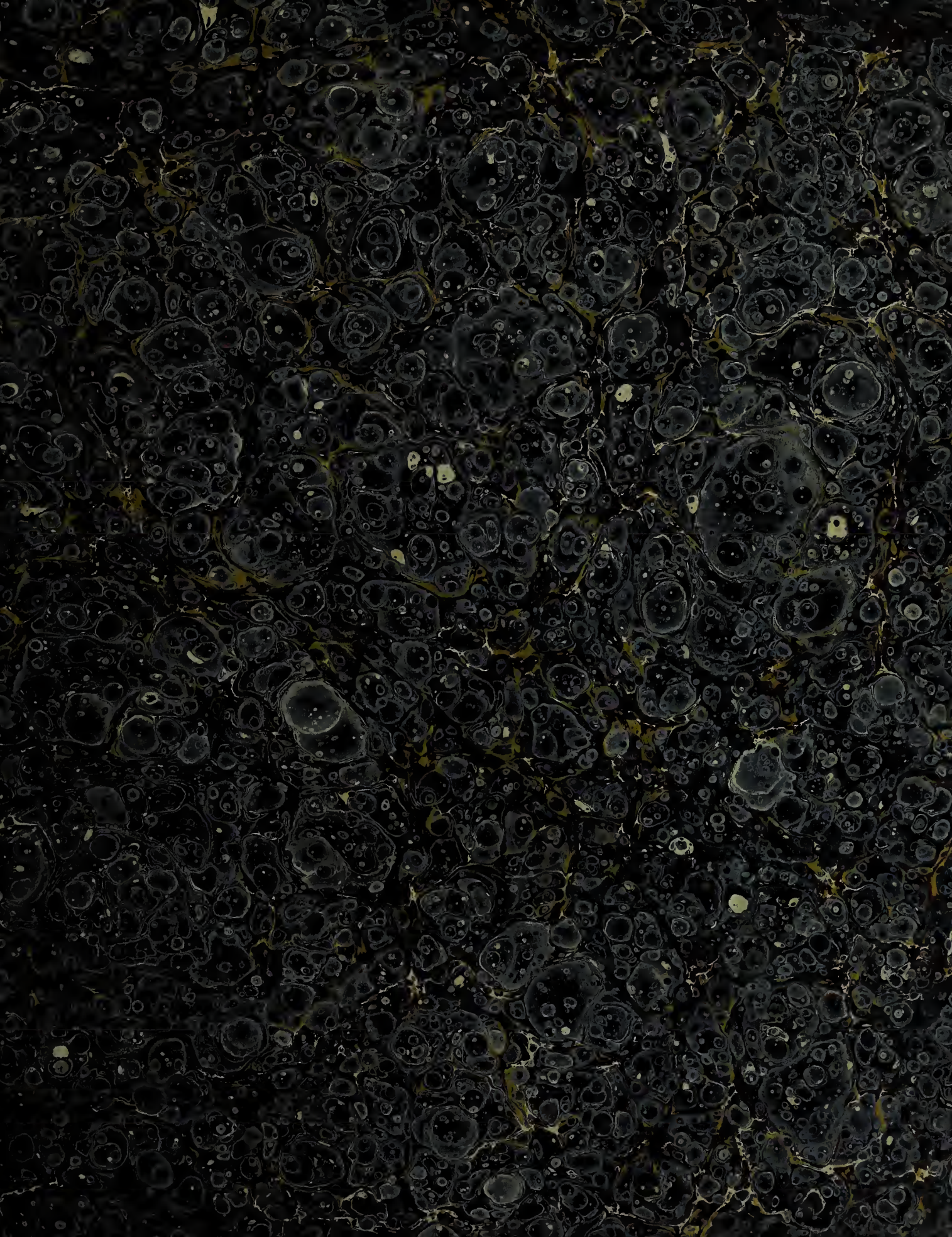






*Hugh A. Wyndham.*





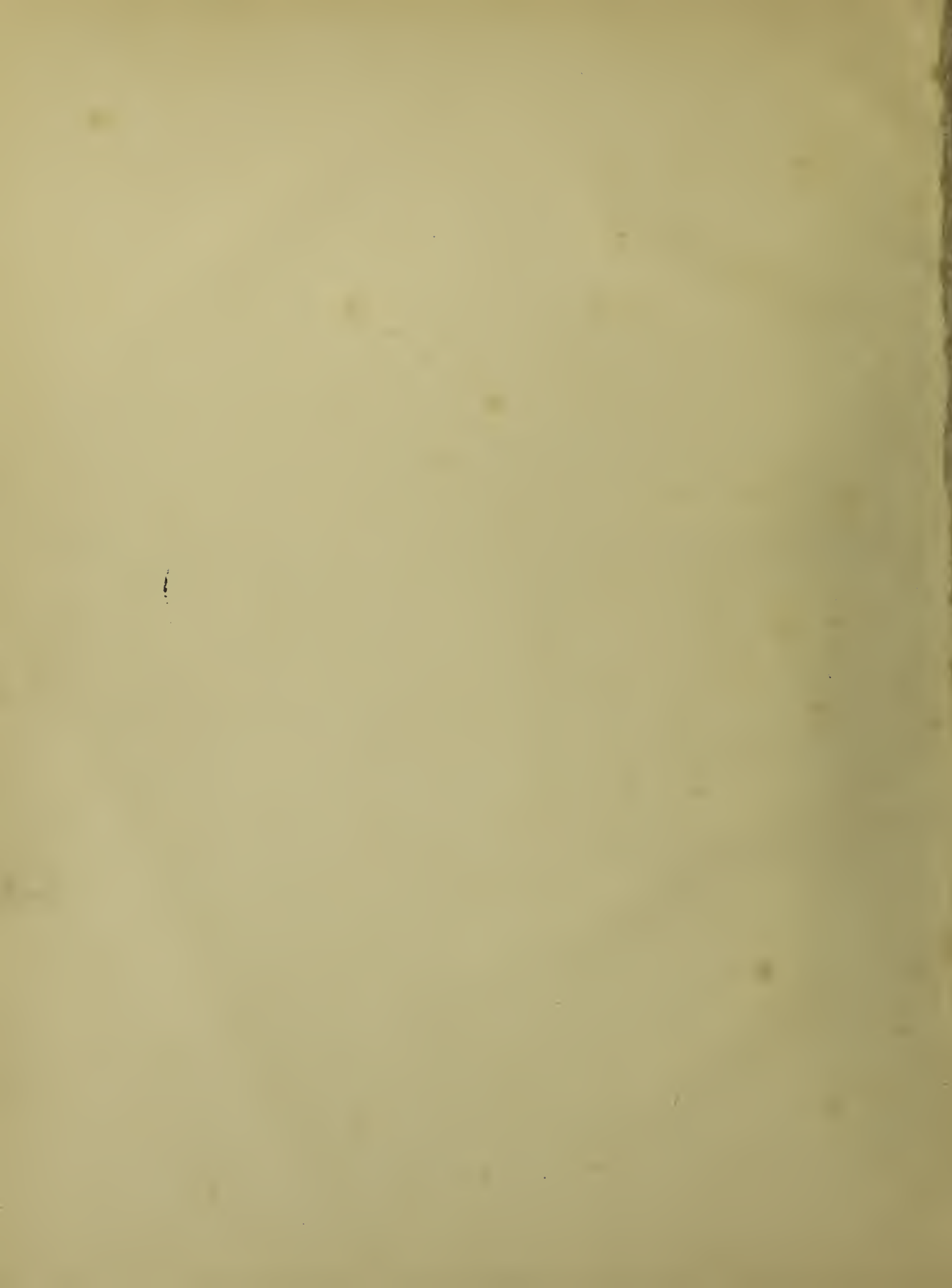


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THE  
H I S T O R Y  
OF  
M E X I C O.

COLLECTED FROM  
SPANISH and MEXICAN HISTORIANS,  
FROM  
MANUSCRIPTS, and Ancient PAINTINGS of the INDIANS.

ILLUSTRATED BY  
CHARTS, and other COPPER PLATES.  
TO WHICH ARE ADDED,  
CRITICAL DISSERTATIONS  
ON THE  
LAND, the ANIMALS, and INHABITANTS of MEXICO.  
By Abbé D. FRANCESCO SAVERIO CLAVIGERO.

Translated from the Original ITALIAN,  
By CHARLES CULLEN, Esq.  
IN TWO VOLUMES.  
VOL. I.

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Printed for G. G. J. and J. ROBINSON, No. 25, Paternoster Row.  
MDCCLXXXVII.

THE HISTORY OF

MEXICO

FROM THE CONQUEST TO THE PRESENT

BY DON JUAN PABLO VILLALBA

TRANSLATED BY

THE REV. FATHER FRANCIS B. LUTHER, O.S.A.

NEW YORK

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TO  
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
**THE EARL OF BUTE.**

MY LORD,

**I** Have the Honour to present to your LORDSHIP a Translation of the History of MEXICO, written by a Native of that Country. The Obligation I am under to your LORDSHIP for an Acquaintance with the Original, and the Relation which every Effort to disseminate pleasing and instructive Knowledge, bears to your Lordship's Life and Manners, have dictated this Address. I chearfully lent my

## DEDICATION.

Industry to assist an Advocate in the Cause of Truth, who saw her Interests abandoned, and felt for her Oppression. Though the Task might easily have fallen into abler Hands, I dare freely appeal to your LORDSHIP for the Fidelity of my Labours.

I have the Honour to be, with the utmost Respect,

MY LORD,

Your LORDSHIP's much obliged,

And most obedient humble Servant,

CHARLES CULLEN.



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## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE discovery of America constitutes one of the most remarkable æras of the world; and the history of it a subject not only curious but universally interesting, from its various connections with almost every other part of the globe. The Spanish historians of the two preceding centuries have done little towards elucidating this point. Partiality, prejudice, ignorance, and credulity, have occasioned them all to blend so many absurdities and improbabilities with their accounts, that it has not been merely difficult, but altogether impossible, to ascertain the truth. To collect from their scattered materials whatever wore the face of probability, that was naturally curious, or politically interesting, so as to form one uniform consistent relation of the whole, was a task in which, for a long time, no modern writer dared to engage. Dr. Robertson at last undertook, and executed it with the applause due to his beauty of style, his industry, and his judgment.

But notwithstanding the assiduity of his researches, and the pains he has taken to extricate facts from the confusion of different authors, as what is true does not always appear possible, and what appears probable is not always true, he has not entirely succeeded, though he has done all that

could be expected. The want of many essential documents, which are preserved in archives of the new world, and other disadvantages attending the situation of a writer at a distance from that continent, unacquainted with its languages, productions, or people, perhaps, have made him diffident of entering into very minute details, or of dwelling upon grounds where he was uncertain of being accurate, and induced him, rather than offer conjectures which might not have reached the truth respecting that country and its inhabitants, to adhere to records more authentic concerning the discoverers of it.

This conduct, however prudent, has left the American side of the picture still greatly in the dark. The Abbé Raynal and M. de Paw have not contributed much to remedy this defect. The history of Mexico, by the Abbé Clavigero, a native of Vera Cruz, who resided near forty years in the provinces of New Spain, examined its natural produce, acquired the language of the Mexicans and other nations, gathered many of their traditions, studied their historical paintings, and other monuments of antiquity, it is presumed, has supplied their deficiencies. The translator, therefore, hopes the present work which contains all the valuable matter of other authors, besides many important particulars never before published, will prove acceptable to the public.



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## P R E F A C E.

**T**HE history of Mexico, undertaken in order to avoid the pain and reproach of idleness to which I found my life condemned, to serve to the utmost of my power my native country, and to restore to their full light truths obscured by an incredible number of modern writers on America, has been a task equally laborious, difficult, and expensive. Exclusive of the great expences occasioned by procuring from Cadiz, Madrid, and other cities of Europe, the books which were necessary to my purpose, I have read and examined every publication which has appeared hitherto on the subject: I have compared the accounts of authors, and critically weighed their authority; I have studied many historical paintings of the Mexicans; I have profited from their manuscripts, which I read formerly in Mexico; and consulted with many persons well acquainted with these countries. In addition to such diligence I might add, to give credit to my labours, that I resided thirty-six years in that extensive kingdom; acquired the Mexican language, and for several years conversed with the Mexicans, whose history I write. I do not, however, flatter myself with having been able to give a perfect work; since, besides finding myself unpossessed of those endowments of genius, judgment, and eloquence, which are the requisites of a good historian, the loss of the greatest part of the Mexican paintings, and the want of many valuable manuscripts which are preserved in different libraries of Mexico, and required repeated consultation, are insuperable obstacles to any one who undertakes such a history, particularly at a considerable distance from these countries. Nevertheless, I hope my work will be acceptable; not on account of the elegance of  
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the style, the beauty of the descriptions, the magnitude of the events, or the weight of the opinions delivered in it; but from the diligence of my researches, the integrity of my relation, and the service done to the learned, who are desirous of being made acquainted with the history of Mexico.

At the persuasion of some persons of learning, I wrote the Essay on the Natural History of Mexico, contained in the first book, which I had not before judged necessary; and it may, in the opinion of many, be considered as foreign to the purpose: but not to deviate from my subject, I have connected the account of natural productions with the general history, by mentioning the use which the Mexicans made of them. On the other hand, to those who are attached to the study of Natural History, this essay will appear, what in truth it is, too confined and superficial; but to satisfy the curious on that subject, it would be necessary to write a work very different from that which I have undertaken. At the same time, I should have spared myself a great deal of trouble, if I had not been obliged to comply with the solicitations of my friends; as in writing that sketch of Natural History, I found it necessary to study the works of Pliny, Dioscorides, Laet, Hernandez, Ulloa, Buffon, Bomare; and other naturalists; not content with what I had seen myself, or the information I had received from intelligent people to whom those countries were well known.

In this history, nothing has been more anxiously studied than fidelity; I might have abridged my labours, and, perhaps, rendered my work more acceptable to many, if all the diligence which I used to investigate facts, had been employed to strew the relation with philosophical and political reflexions, or fictions of capricious invention, after the example of many authors in this boasted age; but to me, as to those who are the sworn enemies of deceit, falsehood, or affectation, truth appears a beauty whose charms increase in proportion to her simplicity of dress. In recounting the events of the conquest made by the Spaniards, I have equally abstained from the panegyric of Solis, or the  
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invectives of Las Casas (*a*) ; being unwilling either to flatter or calumniate my countrymen. I have left facts in the same degree of certainty, or probability, in which I found them ; wherever I could not ascertain an event on account of the disagreement among authors, as for example, the death of Montezuma, I have faithfully reported their different opinions, without having omitted, however, such additional conjectures as reflexion on the subject has suggested. In short, I have always had before my eyes the two sacred laws of history ; not to dare to speak what is false ; nor to fear to speak what is true : and I flatter myself I have violated neither.

I do not doubt there may be readers too nice and refined to bear with the harshness of so many Mexican names as are scattered through this history ; but it is an evil which I have not been able to remedy, without hazarding another defect less tolerable, though sufficiently common in almost all the Europeans who have written on America, that is, the altering of names, for the purpose of softening them, until they are rendered unintelligible. Who would be capable of divining that De Solis speaks of Quauhnahuac, when he says *Quatlabaca* ; of Huejotlipan, where he substitutes *Gualipar* ; or of Cuitlalpitoc, where he writes *Pilpatoc* ? I have therefore thought it most safe to imitate the example of those modern writers, who, whenever they introduce into their works the names of persons, places, or rivers, of any particular country of Europe, write them in the language of its respective nation ; and in the writings of these authors there are names taken from the German, and other tongues, fully harsher to the ear, from the greater concurrence of rough consonants, than any of the words I have made use of. I do not, however, reject names that have been formerly altered, by which there is no danger of being deceived, as they are generally known.

With respect to the geography of Anahuac, I have used every endeavour to render it correct ; availing myself of the knowledge which I

(*a*) I do not mean to charge Solis with flattery, nor Las Casas with calumny : all I wish to be understood is, that I could not adopt the sentiments of Solis, who was ambitious of aggrandizing his hero ; nor of Las Casas, who was fired with pious zeal in behalf of the Indians, without accusing myself of both.

gained in many excursions through that country, as well as the information and writings of others ; after all, I have not entirely succeeded ; for, in spite of my most earnest attempts, I have not been able to procure the few incomplete astronomical observations which have been made on these places. The situation, therefore, and distances mentioned in the body of the history, as well as in the chart, are not to be considered as being ascertained with that precision and accuracy which are required from a geographer ; but according to such computation as could be made by an attentive surveyor who judged by the eye. I have in my hands innumerable ancient and modern charts of Mexico, of which it would have been easy to have copied the most correct ; but among these I have not found even one that is not full of errors, as well in regard to the latitude and longitude of places, as in respect to the division of provinces, the course of rivers, and the direction of the coasts.

To make known what dependence may be placed on any of the charts hitherto published, it will be sufficient to mention the difference between them concerning the longitude of the capital, notwithstanding it ought to have been better ascertained than any other city of Mexico. This difference is not less than fourteen degrees, as by some geographers the city of Mexico is placed in two hundred and sixty-four degrees of longitude from the island of Ferro ; by others, in two hundred and sixty-five ; by others, in two hundred and sixty-six, and even in two hundred and seventy-eight, or rather more.

To give some ornament, however, to my history, as well as to facilitate the understanding of many things described in it, I have added twenty plates. The Mexican characters, the representations of the cities, of the kings, of the armour, of the dresses, of the shields, of the century, of the year, and of the deluge, have been copied from different Mexican paintings. The figure of the greater temple was taken from that of the Anonymous Conqueror, his dimensions of it, however, being corrected, and additions made to it according to the description of other ancient authors. The figure of the other temple is a copy of that which Valades published in his *Christian Rhetoric*.

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The portrait of Montezuma was taken from a copy which Gemelli published of the original, in the possession of Siguenza. The portraits of the conquerors are copies of those which are found in the *Decades* of Herrera. All the other figures are designs from what we have seen ourselves, and the descriptions of ancient historians.

Besides these, I have thought proper to prefix to my narration a short account of the writers on the ancient history of Mexico, to shew the ground-work of my labours; also to do honour to the memory of some illustrious Americans, whose writings are entirely unknown in Europe. It will serve likewise to point out the sources from whence others may obtain the history of Mexico, who may be hereafter inclined to complete this imperfect work.





AN  
ACCOUNT  
OF THE  
WRITERS  
ON THE  
ANCIENT HISTORY OF MEXICO.

*In the Sixteenth Century.*

**F**erdinand Cortes. The four very long letters written by this famous conqueror to his sovereign, Charles the Fifth, containing an account of the Conquest, and many valuable particulars respecting Mexico, and the Mexicans, were published in Spanish, in Latin, in the Tuscan, and other languages; the first of these letters was printed in Seville in 1522; they are all well written, and discover both modesty and sincerity in the relation; as he has neither made a boast of his own actions, nor thrown obscurity on those of others. If he had had the rashness to deceive his king, his enemies who presented so many complaints at court against him, would not have failed to reproach him with such a crime.

Bernal Diaz del Castillo, a soldier and conqueror; *A True History of the Conquest of New Spain*, written by him, was printed in Madrid in 1632, in one volume, folio. Notwithstanding the miscarriage of his undertaking, and the coarseness of the style, this history has been much esteemed for the simplicity and sincerity of its author, which is every where discoverable. He was an eye-witness of all that he relates; but, from being illiterate, he was unqualified for the task he undertook; and frequently shews himself forgetful of facts, by having written many years after the conquest.

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## ACCOUNT OF THE WRITERS ON THE

Alfonso de Mata, and Alfonso d'Ojeda, both conquerors, and writers of commentaries on the conquest of Mexico, which Herrera and Torquemada have made use of. Those of Ojeda are the fullest and the most esteemed. He was more acquainted with the Indians, being the person appointed to attend to the auxiliary troops of the Spaniards.

The Anonymous Conqueror. This is the name given to the author of a short, but very curious, and esteemed relation which is found in the collection of Ramusio, under the title of *The Relation of a Gentleman who attended Ferdinand Cortes*. I have not been able to conjecture who this gentleman may have been, as no author makes mention of him; but, whoever he was, he is candid, accurate, and curious. Without troubling himself with the events of the conquest, he relates what he observed in Mexico concerning the houses, the sepulchres, the arms, the dresses, the manner of eating and drinking, &c. of the Mexicans, and describes the form of their temples. If his work had not been so much confined, there would have been no one comparable to it respecting the antiquities of Mexico.

Francisco Lopez de Gomara. The history of New Spain, written by this learned Spaniard agreeable to information received from the mouths of the conquerors, and the writings of the first religious missionaries who were employed in the conversion of the Mexicans, and printed in Saragossa in 1554, is curious and well drawn up. He was the first who published the festivals, rites, laws, and the method by which the Mexicans computed time: but there are many inaccuracies in it on account of these first informations which he obtained not having been altogether exact. The translation of this work in the Tuscan language, printed at Venice in 1599, is so full of errors it cannot be read without disgust.

Toribio de Benavente. A most celebrated Spaniard of the order of St. Francis, and one of the twelve first preachers who announced the gospel to the Mexicans, known commonly from his evangelical poverty, by the Mexican name of *Motolinia*, wrote, among his apostolical works, *The History of the Indians of New Spain*, divided into three parts. In the first, he explains the rites of their ancient religion; in



the second, their conversion to the Christian faith, and their life when Christians; and in the third, he discourses of their genius, their arts, and their customs. Of this history, which is completed in one volume; folio, there are some copies to be found in Spain. He wrote also a work on the Mexican Calendar (the original of which is preserved in Mexico), and others not less useful to the Spaniards than the Indians.

Andrea d' Olmos. A Franciscan Spaniard, of holy memory. This indefatigable preacher acquired the Mexican, Totonacan, and Huastecan languages, and composed a Grammar and Dictionary of all three. Besides other works written by him for the use of the Spaniards and the Indians, he wrote in Spanish a Treatise on Mexican Antiquities; and in the Mexican language, the exhortations which the ancient Mexicans used to their children, of which there is a specimen in the seventh book of this history.

Bernardo Sahagun, a laborious Franciscan Spaniard. Having been more than sixty years employed in instructing the Mexicans, he made great proficiency in their language and the knowledge of their history. Besides several works written by him, both in Mexican and in Spanish, he composed in twelve great volumes in folio, a Universal Dictionary of the Mexican Language, containing all that belonged to the geography, the religion, and the political and natural history of the Mexicans. This work, of immense erudition and labour, was sent to the royal historiographer of America, resident at Madrid, by the marquis of Villamanrique, viceroy of Mexico; and we do not doubt, but it is still preserved in some library of Spain. He wrote also the General History of New Spain, in four volumes, which were preserved in manuscript in the library of the convent of Franciscans in Tolosa de Navarra, according to the affirmation of Juan de S. Antonio, in his *Bibliotheca Franciscana*.

Alfonso Zurita, a Spanish lawyer and judge of Mexico. After having, by order of king Philip II. made diligent researches into the civil government of the Mexicans, he wrote in Spanish *A compendious Relation of the Lords there were in Mexico, and their Difference:*  
of

## ACCOUNT OF THE WRITERS ON THE

*of the Laws, Usages, and Customs of the Mexicans : of the Tributes which they paid, &c.* The original manuscript in folio, is preserved in the library of the college of St. Peter and St. Paul, of the Jesuits of Mexico. From this work, which is well written, some considerable part of what we have said on the same subject is extracted.

Juan de Tobar, a most noble Jesuit of Mexico. He wrote on the ancient history of the kingdoms of Mexico, of Acolhuacan, and of Tlacopan, after having made diligent enquiries, by order of the viceroy of Mexico, D. Martino Enriquez. By these manuscripts, P. Acosta was principally directed in what he wrote concerning Mexican antiquities, as he himself acknowledges.

Joseph D'Acosta, a most celebrated Spanish Jesuit, well known in the literary world by his writings. This great man, after having resided some years in both the Americas, and informed himself, from experienced people, of the customs of those nations, wrote in Spanish the *Natural and Moral History of the Indians*, which was printed first in Seville, in 1589, reprinted afterwards in Barcelona in 1591, and from thence circulated into various languages of Europe. This work is well written, particularly in regard to the physical observations on the climate of America; but, it is too confined, defective in many articles, and there are some mistakes concerning ancient history.

Fernando Pimentel Ixtlilxochitl, son of *Coanacotzin*, last king of Acolhuacan, and Antonio de Tobar Cano Motezuma Ixtlilxochitl, a descendant of the two royal houses of Mexico and Acolhuacan. These two nobles, at the request of the count of Benavente, and the viceroy of Mexico D. Luis de Velasco, wrote letters on the genealogy of the kings of Acolhuacan, and other points relative to the ancient history of that kingdom, which are preserved in the above mentioned college of the Jesuits.

Antonio Pimentel Ixtlilxochitl, son of D. Fernando Pimentel. He wrote Historical Memoirs of the Kingdom of Acolhuacan, by which Torquemada was assisted; and from it we have taken the calculation



lation mentioned in the fourth book of our history, of the annual expences incurred in the palace of the famous king Nezahualcojotl, great-great-grandfather of that author.

Taddeo de Niza, a noble Indian of Tlascala. He wrote in the year 1548, by order of the viceroy of Mexico, the History of the Conquest, which was subscribed by thirty other nobles of Tlascala.

Gabriel d' Ayala, a noble Indian of Tezcucó. He wrote in the Mexican language Historical Commentaries; containing an account of all the affairs of the Mexicans from the year 1243 of the vulgar æra, unto 1562.

Juan Ventura Zapata e Mendoza, a noble of Tlascala. He wrote in the Mexican language the Chronicle of Tlascala; containing all the events of that nation, from their arrival in the country of Anahuac, to the year 1589.

Pedro Ponce, a noble Indian, rector of Tzompahuacan. He wrote in Spanish, An Account of the Gods and the Rites of Mexican Paganism.

The chiefs of Colhuacan. They wrote the Annals of the Kingdom of Colhuacan. A copy of this work was in the above mentioned library of the Jesuits.

Christoval del Castillo, a Mexican Mestee. He wrote the History of the Travels of the Aztecas, or Mexicans, to the country of Anahuac; which manuscript was preserved in the library of the college of Jesuits of Tepozotlan.

Diego Mugnoz Camargo, a noble Mestee of Tlascala. He wrote in Spanish the History of the City and Republic of Tlascala. Torquemada made use of this work, and there are copies of it both in Spain and Mexico.

Fernando d'Alba Ixtlilxochitl, a Tezcucan, and descendant, in a right line from the kings of Acolhuacan. This noble Indian ex-

tremely conversant with the antiquities of his nation, wrote, at the request of the viceroy of Mexico, several very learned and valuable works; 1. The History of New Spain; 2. The History of the Chemecan Lords; 3. An Epitome of the History of the Kingdom of Tezcucó; 4. Historical Memoirs of the Toltecas, and other nations of Anahuac. All these works, written in Spanish, were preserved in the library of St. Peter and St. Paul of the Jesuits of Mexico, and from them we have extracted some materials for this history. The author was so cautious in writing, that, in order to remove any grounds for suspicion of fiction, he made his accounts conform exactly with the historical paintings, which he inherited from his illustrious ancestors.

Juan Batista Pomar, of Tezcucó, or Cholula, a descendant from a bastard of the royal house of Tezcucó. He wrote Historical Memoirs of that Kingdom, which Torquemada has made use of.

Domingo de San Anton Muñon Chimalpain, a noble Indian of Mexico. He wrote in the Mexican language four works, much esteemed by the intelligent: 1. American Chronicle, containing all the Events of that Nation, from the Year 1068, to the Year 1597 of the vulgar era. 2. The History of the Conquest of Mexico by the Spaniards. 3. *Original* Accounts of the Kingdoms of Acolhuacan, of Mexico, and of other provinces. 4. Historical Commentaries from the year 1064 to 1521. These works, which I most ardently wished for, were preserved in the library of the college of St. Peter and St. Paul of Mexico. Boturini had copies of them, as well as of almost all the works of the Indians, which I have mentioned; there was a copy of the Chronicle also in the library of the college of St. Gregory of the Jesuits of Mexico.

Fernando d' Alvarado Tezozomoc, an Indian of Mexico. He wrote in Spanish a Mexican Chronicle, about the year 1598, which was preserved in the above mentioned library of St. Peter and St. Paul.

Bartolomè de Las Casas, a famous Dominican Spaniard, first bishop of Chiapa, and highly worthy of memory among the Indians. The  
bitter



bitter memorials presented by this venerable prelate to king Charles V. and Philip II. in favour of the Indians, and against the Spanish conquerors, printed in Seville, and afterwards translated and reprinted, in odium to the Spaniards, in various languages of Europe; contains some particulars of the ancient history of the Mexicans, but so altered and exaggerated, we cannot rely on the authority of the author, however otherwise respectable. The excessive fire of his zeal sent forth light and smoke together, that is, he mixed truth with falsehood, not because he studied an opportunity of deceiving his king and the world, as a suspicion of such guilt in him would be offering wrong to that virtue which his enemies acknowledged and revered; but because, not having been present at what he relates concerning Mexico, he trusted too much to information from others, which will be made to appear in some parts of this history. We should have, probably, been much more assisted by two great works of the same prelate never published, the one, A History of the Climate and Soil of the Countries of America; and the Genius and Manners, &c. of the Americans under Subjection to the Catholic King. This manuscript, consisting of 830 pages, was preserved in the library of the Dominicans of Valladolid, in Spain, where it was put by Remesal, as he makes us credit in his Chronicle of the Dominicans of Chiapa and Guatemala. The other, A General History of America, in three volumes, folio; a copy of which was in the library of the count of Villaumbrosa, in Madrid, where Pinelo saw it, as he affirms, in his *Bibliotheca Occidentali*: two volumes of this history the above mentioned author saw in the celebrated archives of Simancas, which have been the sepulchre of many precious manuscripts on America. Two volumes also were in the library of J. Kricio, at Amsterdam.

Agustino Davila, and Padillo, a noble and ingenious Dominican of Mexico, preacher to king Philip III. royal historiographer of America, and archbishop of the island of St. Domingo. Besides the Chronicle of the Dominicans of Mexico, printed in Madrid, in 1596, and the History of New Spain and Florida, printed in Valladolid, in 1632, he wrote the Ancient History of the Mexicans, employing materials already collected by Fernando Duran, a Dominican of Tezcuca; but this work has not been found.



Doctor Cervantes, dean of the metropolitan church of Mexico. Herrera, the Chronicle-writer, praises the Historical Memoirs of Mexico, written by this author ; but we have no other intelligence of him.

Antonio de Saavedra Guzman, a noble Mexican, during his voyage to Spain, wrote in twenty cantos, the History of the Conquest of Mexico, and printed it in Madrid, under the Spanish title of *El Peregrino Indiano*, in 1599. This work ought to be reckoned amongst the histories of Mexico ; for it has nothing of poetry but the measure.

Pedro Guterrez de S. Chiara. Betancourt made use of the manuscripts of this author in his History of Mexico ; but we know nothing of the title or quality of the work, nor of the country of the author, although we suspect he was an Indian. .

*In the Seventeenth Century.*

Antonio de Herrera, royal historiographer for the Indies. This candid and judicious author wrote in four volumes in folio, Eight Decades of the History of America, beginning from the year 1492, together with a Geographical Description of the Spanish Colonies ; which work was printed for the first time in Madrid, at the beginning of the last century, and afterwards reprinted in 1730 ; also translated and published in other languages of Europe. Although the principal design of the author was to relate the actions of the Spaniards, he does not, however, omit the Ancient History of the Americans ; but in what relates to the Mexicans, he copies for the most part the accounts of Acofta and Gomara. His method, however, like that of all rigid annalists, is disagreeable to the lovers of history, because at every step the narration of facts is interrupted with the account of other unconnected occurrences.

Arigo Martinez, a foreign author, although of Spanish surname. After having travelled through the greatest part of Europe, and resided many years in Mexico, where he made himself most useful by his great skill in mathematics, he wrote the History of New Spain, which

which was printed in Mexico in 1606. In the Ancient History, he treads for the most part in the footsteps of Acoſta; but there are astronomical and phyſical obſervations in it of importance to the geography and natural hiſtory of theſe countries.

Gregorio Garcia, a Dominican Spaniard. His famous treatiſe on the Origin of the Americans, printed in quarto, at Valentia, in 1607, afterwards enlarged and reprinted in Madrid, in 1729, in folio, is a work of vaſt erudition, but almoſt totally uſeleſs, as it gives little or no aſſiſtance in diſcovering truth; the foundation for the opinions which he maintains concerning the origin of the Americans, are, for the moſt part, weak conjectures founded on the reſemblance between ſome of their cuſtoms and words, and thoſe of other nations.

Juan de Torquemada, a Franciſcan Spaniard. The Hiſtory of Mexico, written by him under the title of the Indian Monarchy, printed in Madrid about 1614, in three great volumes in folio, is, without queſtion, the moſt complete in reſpect to the antiquity of Mexico of any hitherto published. The author reſided in Mexico from his youth to his death; knew the Mexican language well, converſed with the Mexicans for upwards of fifty years, collected a great number of ancient pictures and excellent manuſcripts, and laboured at his work more than twenty years; but in ſpite of his diligence, and ſuch advantages, he frequently betrays want of memory, of critical ſkill, and good taſte; and in his hiſtory there appear many groſs contradictions, particularly in chronology, ſeveral childiſh recitals, and a great deal of ſuperfluous learning, on which account it requires conſiderable patience to read it; nevertheleſs, there being many things of curioſity and value in it, which would be ſought for in vain in other authors, I was under the neceſſity to do with this hiſtory what Virgil did with the works of Ennius, to ſearch for the gems amongſt the rubbiſh.

Arrias Villalobos, a Spaniard. His Hiſtory of Mexico carried on from the foundation of the capital, to the year 1623, written in verſe, and printed there in the above year, is a work of little value.

Chriſtoval



## ACCOUNT OF THE WRITERS OF THE

Christoval Chaves Castillejo, a Spaniard. He wrote, about the year 1632, a volume in folio, on the Origin of the Indians, and their first Colonies in the Country of Anahuac.

Carlos de Sigüenza e Gongora, a celebrated Mexican professor of mathematics in the university of his native country. This author has been one of the most comprehensive writers on the History of Mexico, as he made, at a great expence, a large and choice collection of ancient pictures and manuscripts, and applied himself with the greatest diligence and assiduity to illustrate the antiquity of that kingdom. Besides many mathematical, critical, historical, and poetical works composed by him, some of them manuscripts, some of them printed in Mexico from the year 1680 to 1693, he wrote in Spanish, 1. *The Mexican Cyclography*, a work of great labour, in which, by calculating eclipses and comets, marked in the historical pictures of the Mexicans, he adjusted their epochs with ours, and by availing himself of good instruction, explained the method they used to count centuries, years, and months. 2. *The History of the Cbechemcan Empire*, in which he explains what he found in Mexican manuscripts and paintings concerning the first colonies which passed from Asia to America, and the events of the most ancient nations established in Anahuac. 3. A long and learned Dissertation on the Announcing of the Gospel in Anahuac; which was done there, as he believed, by the apostle St. Thomas, supporting his opinion on traditions of the Indians, crosses found, and formerly worshipped in Mexico, and other monuments. 4. The Genealogy of the Mexican Kings; in which he traced their ascending line as far back as the seventh century of the Christian æra. 5. Critical Annotations on the Works of Torquemada and Bernal Diaz; all these most learned manuscripts which would have afforded considerable aid to this history, were lost through the negligence of the heirs of that learned author; and there now remain only some fragments of them preserved in the works of other contemporary writers, namely, of Gemelli, Betancourt, and Florencia.

Agustino de Betancourt, a Franciscan of Mexico: his *Ancient and Modern History of Mexico*, printed in that capital, in 1698, in one volume



volume in folio, under the title of *The Mexican Theatre*, is nothing else in respect to ancient history, but an abridgment of Torquemada done in haste, and written with little accuracy.

Antonio de Solis, royal historiographer of America. The History of the Conquest of New Spain, written by this polished and ingenious Spaniard, is more a panegyric than a history. His diction is pure and elegant, but his manner is rather affected; the sentences are too much laboured, and the public speeches are the work of his own fancy; like one less studious of truth than embellishment, he frequently contradicts authors the most worthy of credit, and even Cortes himself, whose panegyric he undertook. In the last books of this history, we shall take notice of some of the mistakes of this famous writer.

*In the Eighteenth Century.*

Pédro Fernandez del Pulgar, a learned Spaniard, successor to Solis in the office of historiographer. *The true History of the Conquest of New Spain*, written by him, is found cited in the Preface of the modern edition of Herrera, but we have not seen it. It is to be believed, that he set about writing it for the purpose of correcting the errors of his predecessor.

Lorenzo Boturini Benaducci, of Milan. This curious and learned gentleman arrived in Mexico in 1736; and, desirous of writing the history of that kingdom, he made, during eight years he remained there, the most diligent researches into its antiquity; acquired a considerable mastery of the Mexican language, entered into friendship with the Indians to obtain their ancient pictures from them, and procured copies of many valuable manuscripts which were in the libraries of the monasteries. The museum which he formed of paintings and ancient manuscripts, was the most numerous and select ever seen in that kingdom, excepting that of the celebrated Siguenza; but before he put a hand to his work, the excessive jealousy of the Spanish government stripped him of all his literary estate, and sent him into Spain, where,  
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being entirely cleared from every suspicion against his loyalty and honour, but without recovering his manuscripts, he published in Madrid, in 1746, in one volume in quarto, a sketch of the great history he was meditating. It was found to contain much important knowledge, never before published; but there were also some errors in it. The historical system which he had formed to himself, was too magnificent for execution, and therefore fantastical.

Besides these and other Spanish and Indian writers, there are some anonymous writers whose works are worthy of being recorded on account of the importance of their subject; such as, 1. Certain Annals of the Toltecan nation, painted on paper, and written in the Mexican language, in which there is an account given of the pilgrimage and wars of the Toltecas, of their king, of the founding of Tollan, their metropolis, and other occurrences until the year 1547 of the vulgar æra. 2. Certain Historical Commentaries in the Mexican Language on the Events of the Aztecan, or Mexican Nation, from the year 1066 to 1316; and others also in the Mexican language from the year 1367 to 1509. 3. A Mexican History in the Mexican language, carried back as far as the year 1406. In this history, the arrival of the Mexicans at the city of Tollan, is fixed at 1196, agreeable to what we report in our history. All these manuscripts were in the valuable museum of Boturini.

We shall not here mention those authors who wrote on the antiquity of Michuacan, of Yucatan, of Guatemala, and of New Mexico; because, although many at present believe all these provinces were comprehended in Mexico, they did not belong to the Mexican empire, the history of which we write. We have mentioned the writers on the ancient history of the kingdom of Acolhuacan, and the republic of Tlascala, because their events are for the most part connected with those of the Mexicans.

If in enumerating the writers on Mexico, we meant to display our erudition, we could add a long catalogue of French, English, Italian, Dutch, Flemish, and German writers, who have written either designedly, or accidentally, on the ancient history of that kingdom; but after having read many of them, to obtain assistance to this work, I found none who were of service except the two Italians, Gemelli and

Botu-



Boturini, who having been in Mexico, and procured from the Mexicans many of their paintings, and particular intelligence concerning their antiquity, have contributed in some measure to illustrate their history. All the others have either repeated what was already written by Spanish authors mentioned by us, or have altered facts, at their own discretion, to inveigh the more strongly against the Spaniards, as has lately been done by M. de Paw, in his Philosophical Enquiries concerning the Americans, and Marmontel in his Romance of *The Incas*.

Amongst the foreign historians of Mexico, none is more celebrated by them than the English writer, Thomas Gage, whom I observe many have quoted as an oracle, and yet there is no writer on America more addicted to falsehood. Some, under the influence of the passions of hatred, love, or vanity, have been induced to mix fables with their writings; but Gage appears to have delighted in the invention of falsehoods. What motive or interest could occasion this author to say, that the Capuchins had a beautiful convent in Tacubaja, that in Xalapa there was a bishop's palace erected in his time, with an income of ten thousand ducats; that from Xalapa, he went to Rinconada, and from thence in one day to Tepeaca; that there is in this city a great abundance of *anonas* and of *chicozapotes*, that this fruit has a kernel larger than a pear; that the wilderness of the Carmelites stands to the north-west of the capital; that the Spaniards burnt the city Tinguetz, in Quivira; that having rebuilt it, they inhabited it at the time he was there; that the Jesuits had a college in it; and a thousand other ridiculous lies, which appear in every page, and excite in readers who are acquainted with these countries both laughter and contempt?

Amongst modern writers on American affairs, the most famous and esteemed are the Abbé Raynal and Dr. Robertson. The Abbé, besides several gross delusions, into which he has fallen respecting the present state of New Spain, doubts of every thing which is said concerning the founding of Mexico, and the ancient history of the Mexicans. "Nothing," says he, "are we permitted to affirm, except that the Mexican empire was governed by Montezuma, at the time that the Spaniards landed on the Mexican coast." This is the manner of speaking of a philosopher of the eighteenth century. Nothing more



can we be permitted to affirm? And why not doubt also of the existence of Montezuma? If we are permitted to affirm this, as it is ascertained by the testimony of the Spaniards who saw that king, we find the attestation of the same Spaniards to a vast many other things belonging to the ancient history of Mexico which were seen by them, and further confirmed by the depositions of the Indians themselves. Such particulars therefore may be affirmed, as positively as the existence of Montezuma, or we ought also to entertain a doubt of it. If there is reason, however, to doubt of all the ancient history of the Mexicans, the antiquity of most other nations in the world will come equally in question; for it is not easy to find another history, the events of which have been confirmed by a greater number of historians than those of the Mexicans; nor do we know that any people ever published so severe a law against false historians as that of the *Acolhuas* mentioned in our eighth book.

Dr. Robertson, though more moderate than Raynal, in his distrust of their history, and furnished with more Spanish books and manuscripts, has fallen into more errors and contradictions while he endeavoured to penetrate further into the knowledge of America and the Americans. To make us despair of being able to obtain any tolerable knowledge of the institutions and customs of the Mexicans, he exaggerates the negligence of the conquerors, and the destruction made of the historical monuments of that nation by the superstition of the first missionaries: "In consequence," says he, "of this fanatical zeal of the monks, we have totally lost every intelligence of the most remote events contained in these rude monuments, and there does not remain a *single* trace of the policy and ancient revolutions of the empire, excepting those which are derived from tradition, or from some fragments of their historical pictures which escaped the barbarous search of Zumaraga. It appears evident from the experience of all nations, that the memory of past events cannot be long preserved, nor transmitted with fidelity by tradition. The Mexican pictures, which are supposed to have served as annals of their empire, are few in number, and of ambiguous meaning. Thus from the uncertainty of the one, and the obscurity of the others, we are obliged to avail ourselves of such intelligence as can be gleaned from the

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“ imperfect materials which are found scattered in the Spanish writers.” But in these assertions this author is grievously deceived; for, 1. The materials which we find in Spanish historians are not so imperfect, but we may form from them a probable, though not altogether an authentic history of the Mexicans; which will appear evident to any one who impartially consults them; all that is necessary is to make a selection. 2. Nor in the writing such a history is it necessary to use the materials of the Spanish writers, while there are so many histories and memoirs written by the Indians themselves, of which Robertson had no knowledge. 3. Nor are the historical pictures so few in number, which escaped the search of the first missionaries, unless we compare those which remain with the incredible quantity that formerly existed; as may easily be understood from this history, Torquemada, and other writers. 4. Neither are such pictures of ambiguous meaning, except to Robertson and those who do not understand the characters and figures of the Mexicans, nor know the method they used to represent things. Our writings are of doubtful signification to those who have not learned to read them. At the time the missionaries made that unfortunate burning of the pictures, many Acolhuan, Mexican, Tepanecan, Tlascalan, and other historians were living, and employed themselves to repair the loss of these monuments. This they in part accomplished by painting new pictures, or making use of our characters which they had learned, and instructing, by word of mouth, their preachers in their antiquity, that it might be preserved in their writings, which Motolinia, Olmos, and Sahagun have done. It is therefore absolutely false, that every knowledge of the most remote events has been totally lost. It is false, besides, that there is not a single trace remaining of the political government, and ancient revolutions of the empire, excepting what is derived from tradition, &c. In this history, and chiefly in the dissertations, we shall detect some of the many misrepresentations which occur in the history of the above mentioned author, and in the works of other foreign writers, which we might swell into large volumes. Some authors not contented with introducing errors, trifles, and lies, into the history of Mexico, have confounded it with false images and figures, such as those of the famous Theodore Bry. In Gage’s work, in



the general history of the travels of Prevost, and others, is represented a beautiful road made over the Mexican lake, from Mexico to Tezcuco, which is certainly the greatest absurdity imaginable. The great work, entitled, *La Galerie agreable du Mond*, says that ambassadors were sent in former times to the court of Mexico, mounted on elephants. Such fictions belong to romance not history.

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## O F P A I N T I N G S.

WE do not pretend here to give a register of all the Mexican pictures saved from the burning of the first missionaries, or executed afterwards by the Indian historians of the sixteenth century, of which some Spanish writers have availed themselves, as such an enumeration would not be less useless than tedious to our readers; but will only mention some collections, the knowledge of which may be of service to any one inclined to write the history of that kingdom.

I. The collection of Mendoza. Thus we call the collection of sixty-three Mexican paintings made by the first bishop of Mexico, D. Antonio Mendoza, to which he caused to be added skilful interpretations in the Mexican and Spanish languages, for the purpose of sending them to the emperor Charles V. The vessel in which they were sent was taken by a French corsair, and carried into France. The paintings fell into the hands of Thevenot, geographer to his most Christian majesty, of whose heirs they were purchased at a high price by Hakluyt, then chaplain to the English ambassador at the court of France. Being from thence carried into England, the Spanish interpretations were translated into English by Locke, but not the famous metaphysician, by order of sir Walter Raleigh; and lastly, at the request of the learned sir Henry Spelman, published by Samuel Purchas in the third volume of his Collection. In 1692, they were afresh printed in Paris, with a French interpretation by Thevenot, in the second volume of his work, entitled, *Relation de divers Voyages Curieux*. The pictures as

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we have mentioned before, were sixty-three in number ; the twelve first containing the history of the foundation of Mexico, the years and conquests of the Mexican kings ; the thirty-six following, representing the tributary cities of that crown, and the quantity and species of their tributes ; and the remaining fifteen, explained a part of the education of their youth, and their civil government. But it is necessary to observe, that the edition by Thevenot is imperfect ; for in the copies of the eleventh and twelfth pictures, the figures of the years are changed ; the figures which belong to the reign of Montezuma, being applied to the reign of Ahuitzotl ; and on the contrary : the copies of the twenty-first and twenty-second pictures are entirely wanting, and also in great part the figures of the tributary cities. Kirker republished a copy of the first painting from that of Purchas, in his work, entitled, *Oedipus Ægyptiacus*. This collection of Mendoza we have diligently studied, and obtained much assistance to our history from it.

II. The collection of the Vatican. Acofta makes mention of some painted Mexican annals which were in his time in the library of the Vatican. We have no doubt but they are still there ; considering the laudable curiosity and great attention of the Italian gentlemen to preserve such monuments of antiquity ; but we had not any opportunity of applying there to consult them.

III. The collection of Vienna. Eight Mexican paintings are preserved in the library of this court. “ From a note,” says Dr. Robertson, “ to this Mexican code, it appears, that it was made a present by Emanuel, king of Portugal, to pope Clement VII. After “ having passed through the hands of several illustrious proprietors, it “ came into the possession of the cardinal of Saxe Eisenach, who presented it to the emperor Leopold.” The same author, in his History of America, gives a copy of one of these paintings, the first part of which represents a king, who makes war upon a city after having sent an embassy to it. The figures of temples, and of some years and days appear in it ; but as it is a single copy without colours, or those marks in the human figures, which, in other Mexican paintings, enable

able us to distinguish persons, it is not simply difficult, but totally impossible to comprehend its signification. If Dr. Robertson, had along with it published the other seven copies sent him from Vienna, probably the meaning of them all might have been understood.

IV. The collection of Siguenza. This very learned Mexican having been extremely attached to the study of antiquity, collected a large number of select ancient paintings, part of which he purchased at a great expence, and part were left him in legacy by the very noble Indian D. Juan d'Alba Ixtlilxochitl, who inherited them from the kings of Tezcuco, his ancestors. Those representations of the Mexican century, and the migration of the Aztecas; and those portraits of the Mexican kings, which Gemelli published in his *Tour of the World*, are copies of the paintings belonging to Siguenza, who was living in Mexico when Gemelli landed there (*a*). The figure of the century, and the Mexican year, is the same in effect with that published a century before in Italy by Valades, in his *Christian Rhetorick*. Siguenza, after having made use of the above mentioned paintings in his learned works, left them at his death to the college of St. Peter and St. Paul of the Jesuits of Mexico; together with his select library, and excellent mathematical instruments; where we saw and consulted in the year 1759, some volumes of such paintings, containing chiefly the penal laws of the Mexicans.

(*a*) Dr. Robertson says, that the painting of the migration of the Mexicans, or Aztecas, was given to Gemelli by D. Christoval Guadalaxara; but in that he contradicts Gemelli himself, who professes he was indebted to Siguenza for all the Mexican antiquities that are copied in his relation. From Guadalaxara he had only the chart of the Mexican lake. "But as now," adds Robertson, "it appears to be a generally received opinion, supported on I know not what evidence, that Carreri never went out of Italy, and that his famous *Tour of the World* was the narrative of fictitious travels, I have been unwilling to make any mention of these pictures." If we did not live in the eighteenth century, in which the most extravagant sentiments have been adopted, I should be astonished that such an opinion was generally received. Who can possibly imagine, that any man who was never at Mexico should have been capable of giving the most circumstantial account of the most minute events of that time, of the persons then living, of their rank and employments, of all the monasteries of Mexico and other cities, of the number of their religious, of the altars of every church; and other particulars never before published? On the contrary, we must declare, in justice to the merit of this Italian, that we have found no traveller more accurate and exact in relating all that he saw himself, or learned by information from others.

V. The

V. The collection of Boturini. This valuable collection of Mexican antiquities, seized upon formerly, and taken from that learned and industrious gentleman by the jealous government of Mexico, was preserved chiefly in the archives of the viceroy. We saw some of these paintings, representing some events of the conquest, and some fine portraits of the kings of Mexico. In 1770, were published in Mexico, along with the letters of Cortes, the figure of the Mexican year, and thirty-two copies of paintings of tributes, which were paid by different cities to the crown of Mexico, taken from the museum of Boturini. Those of the tributes are the same with Mendosa's, published by Purchas and Thevenot, but they are better executed, and have the figures of the tributary cities, which are entirely wanting in those of Purchas and Thevenot; but still six copies of those representing the tributes are wanting, and there are a thousand blunders in the interpretations, arising from total ignorance of antiquity, and the Mexican language. So much is necessary to be observed, that they who see that work published in Mexico, under a respectable name, may not be led into errors.



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## A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

**W** Herever we have occasion to make mention of perches, feet, or inches, without any specification, they are to be understood, according to the measures of Paris; which, as they are more generally known, will, therefore, not be so apt to cause ambiguity to the reader. The perch of Paris (*toise*) is equal to six royal feet (*pie du roi*). Every foot is equal to twelve inches, or thumbs (*pouces*), and every inch to twelve lines. A line is supposed to consist of ten parts, or points, in order to be able the more easily to express the proportion which this foot bears to others. The Toledan, or Spanish foot, which is the third part of a Castilian *vara* (yard), is to the royal foot as 1240 to 1440; that is, of the 1440 parts, of which the royal foot is considered to be composed, the Toledan foot has 1240; wherefore seven Toledan feet make about six royal feet, or a Parisian perch.

In the chart of the Mexican empire, we have thought it sufficient to mark the provinces, and some few places; omitting a great many, even considerable cities, as their names are so long, the insertion of them would not have left room for the names of the provinces.

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# CONTENTS.

## BOOK I.

*DIVISION of the country of Anahuac, 1.—Provinces of the kingdom of Mexico, 4.—Rivers, lakes, and fountains, 9.—Climate of Anahuac, 11.—Mountains, stones, and minerals, 13.—Plants esteemed for their flowers, 17.—Plants valued for their fruit, 19.—Plants valued for their roots, leaves, trunk, or wood, 27.—Plants of use for their resin, gum, oil, and juice, 32.—Quadrupeds of the kingdom of Anahuac, 36.—Birds of Mexico, 46.—Reptiles of Mexico, 56.—Fish of the seas, rivers, and lakes of Anahuac, 61.—The insects of Mexico, 67.—Characters of the Mexicans and other nations of Anahuac — 77*

## BOOK II.

*Of the Toltecas, 83.—Great civilization of the Toltecas, 86.—Ruin of the Toltecas, 89.—The Chechemecas, 90.—Xolotl I. king of the Chechemecas in Anahuac, 91.—Arrival of the Acolhuas and other nations, 93.—Division of the states and rebellion, 95.—Death and funeral of Xolotl, 97.—Nopaltzin II. king of the Chechemecas, 97.—Tlotzin III. king of the Chechemecas, 100.—Quinaltzin IV. king of the Chechemecas, ib.—The Olmecas and the Otomies, 103.—The Tarascas, 105.—Mazahuas, Matlatzincas, and other nations, ib.—The Nahuatlacas, 107.—The Tlascalans, 108.—Migration of the Mexicans to Anahuac, 112.—Slavery of the Mexicans in Colhuacan, 118.—Foundation of Mexico, 122.—A human sacrifice, — 124*

## BOOK III.

*Acamapitzin I. king of Mexico, 126.—Quauquauhpitzahuac I. king of Tlatelolco, 127.—Taxes imposed on the Mexicans, 128.—Huitzilbuitl II. king of Mexico, 131.—Tecottala, king of Acolhuacan, 132.—Enmity of Maxtlaton to the Mexicans, 134.—Tlacatcott II. king of Tlatelolco, 135.—Ixtilxochitl, king of Acolhuacan, 136.—Chimalpopoca III. king of Mexico, 138.—Memorable conduct of Cabuacucuenotzin, 139.—Tragical death of Ixtilxochitl, and tyranny of Tezozomoc, 140.—New Taxes imposed by the tyrant, 143.—Death of the tyrant Tezozomoc, 145.—Maxtlaton, tyrant of Acolhuacan, 148.—Injuries done to the king of Mexico, 149.—Imprisonment and death of king Chimalpopoca, 150.—Negotiations of Nezahuacochtli to obtain  
Vol. I. o obtain*



# C O N T E N T S.

*obtain the crown, 155.—Itzcoatl, fourth king of Mexico, 156.—Occurrences to Montezuma Ihuacamina, 158.—War against the tyrant, 163.—Conquest of Azcapazalco, and death of the tyrant Maxilaton, 166*

## B O O K IV.

*Re-establishment of the royal family of the Chacbenecas on the throne of Acolhuacan, 169.—Conquest of Cojobuacan and other places, 170.—Monarchy of Tacuba, and alliance with the three kings, 171.—Acts of king Nezabualcojotl, 172.—Conquest of Xochimilco, Cuiclabuac, and other places, 173.—Montezuma I. fifth king of Mexico, 176.—Atrocious act of the Chalchecs, 177.—Marriage of Nezabualcojotl with a princess of Tacuba, 178.—Death of Quaxbilaton, 179.—Conquests of Montezuma, ib.—Inundation of Mexico, 180.—Famines in Mexico, 181.—New conquests and death of Montezuma, 183.—Axayacatl, sixth king of Mexico, 186.—Death and Eulogy of king Nezabualcojotl, 188.—Conquest of Tlatelolco, and death of king Moquibuiux, 192.—New conquests and death of Axayacatl, 196.—Tizoc, seventh king of Mexico, 197.—War between Tezcucio and Huexotzinco, 198.—Marriage of Nezabualpilli with two noble women of Mexico, 199.—Tragic death of Tizoc, ib.—Ahuitzotl, eighth king of Mexico, 200.—Dedications of the greater temple of Mexico, 201.—Conquests of king Ahuitzotl, 202.—New Inundation of Mexico, 203.—New Conquests and death of Ahuitzotl, 205.*

## B O O K V.

*Montezuma II. ninth king of Mexico, 207.—Department and ceremonials of Montezuma II. 210.—Magnificence of the palaces and royal houses, 213.—The good and bad of Montezuma, 215.—War of Tlascala, 217.—Tlabaicol, a celebrated general of the Tlascalans, 221.—Famine in the empire, and public works in the capital, 223.—Rebellion of the Mixtecas and Zapotecas, 224.—Contest between Huexotzinco and Cholula, ib.—Expedition against Atlixco and other places, 226.—Presages of the war with the Spaniards, 226.—Memorable event of a Mexican princess, 228.—Uncommon occurrences, 231.—New altar for sacrifices and further expeditions, ib.—Death and eulogy of Nezabualpilli, 233.—Revolutions in the kingdom of Acolhuacan, 236*

## B O O K VI.

*Religious system of the Mexicans, 241.—The gods of Providence and of heaven, 244.—The deification of the sun and the moon, 246.—The god of air, 248.—The gods of mountains, water, fire, earth, night, and hell, 251.—The gods of war, 252.—The gods of commerce, hunting, fishing, &c. 256.—Their idols, and the manner of worshipping their gods, 259.—Transformations, 260.—The greater temple of Mexico, 260.—Buildings annexed to the greater temple, 264.—Other temples, 265.—Revenues of the temples, 269.—Number and different ranks of the priests, 270.—The employments, dress, and life of the priests, 272.—The priestesses, 274.—Different religious orders, 276.—Common sacrifices of human victims, 277.—The gladiatorial sacrifice, 280.—The number of sacrifices uncertain, 281.—Inhuman sacrifices in Quauhtitlan, 283.—Austerities and fasting of the Mexicans, 284.—Remarkable acts of penitence of the Tlascalans, 287.—The age, century, and year of the Mexicans, 288.—The Mexican month,*

# C O N T E N T S.

291.—*Intercalary days*, 293.—*Divination*, 295.—*Figures of the century, the year and month*,  
*ibid.*—*Years and months of the Chiapanec*, 296.—*Festivals of the four first months*, 29.—  
*Grand festival of the god Texcatlipoca*, 297.—*Grand festival of Huitzilopochtli*, 301.—*Festi-*  
*vals of the sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth months*, 304.—*Festivals of the tenth, eleventh,*  
*twelfth, and thirteenth months*, 306.—*Festivals of the five last months*, 309.—*Secular festival*,  
 313.—*Rites observed at the birth of children*, 315.—*Nuptial rites*, 318.—*Funeral rites*, 322.—  
*Their sepulchres*, ————— 325

## B O O K VII.

*Education of the Mexican youth*, 328.—*Explanation of the seven Mexican paintings on Educa-*  
*tion*, 330.—*The exhortations of a Mexican to his son*, 331.—*Exhortations of a Mexican mother*  
*to her daughter*, 334.—*Public schools and seminaries*, 336.—*Laws in the election of a king*, 338.—  
*The pomp and ceremonies at the proclamation and unction of the king*, 339.—*The coronation,*  
*crown, dress, and other insignia of royalty*, 341.—*Prerogatives of the crown*, 342.—*The royal*  
*council and officers of the court*, 343.—*Ambassadors*, 344.—*Couriers, or posts*, 345.—*The no-*  
*bility and rights of succession*, 346.—*Division of the lands, and titles of possession and property*,  
 348.—*The tributes and taxes laid on the subjects of the crown*, 350.—*Magistrates of Mexico and*  
*Acolhuacan*, 352.—*Penal laws*, 355.—*Laws concerning slaves*, 359.—*Laws of other countries*  
*of Anahuac*, 361.—*Punishments and prisons*, 363.—*Officers of war and military orders*, 363.—  
*The military dress of the king*, 365.—*The arms of the Mexicans*, *ibid.*—*Standards and mar-*  
*tial music*, 368.—*The mode of declaring and carrying on war*, 369.—*Fortifications*, 372.—*Floating*  
*fields and gardens of the Mexican lake*, 375.—*Manner of cultivating the earth*, 376.—*Thresh-*  
*ing-floors and granaries*, 377.—*Kitchen and other gardens and woods*, 378.—*Plants most cul-*  
*tivated by the Mexicans*, 380.—*Animals bred by the Mexicans*, *ib.*—*Chace of the Mexicans*,  
 381.—*Fishing*, 384.—*Commerce*, *ib.*—*Money*, 386.—*Regulations of the market*, 387.—*Cus-*  
*tons of the merchants in their journeys*, 388.—*Roads, houses for travellers, vessels, and bridges*,  
 389.—*Men who carried burdens*, 390.—*Mexican language*, 391.—*Eloquence and poetry*, 394.—  
*Mexican theatre*, 396.—*Music*, 398.—*Dancing*, 399.—*Games*, 401.—*Different kinds of Mexi-*  
*can paintings*, 405.—*Cloths and Colours*, 407.—*Character of their paintings, and mode of*  
*representing objects*, 409.—*Sculpture*, 412.— *Casting of metals*, 413.—*Mosaic works*, 414.—  
*Civil architecture*, 416.—*Aqueducts and Ways upon the lake*, 419.—*Remains of ancient edi-*  
*fices*, 420.—*Stone-cutters, engravers, jewellers, and potters*, 421.—*Carpenters, Weavers, &c.*  
 423.—*List of the rarities sent by Cortes to Charles V.* 424.—*Knowledge of nature, and use of*  
*medicinal simples*, 426.—*Oils, ointments, and infusions, &c.* 428.—*Blood-letting and baths*,  
*ibid.*—*Temascalli, or vapour-baths of the Mexicans*, 429.—*Surgery*, 430.—*Aliment of the*  
*Mexicans*, 431.—*Wine*, 435.—*Dress*, 436.—*Ornaments*, 437.—*Domestic furniture and em-*  
*ployments, ib.*—*Plants used instead of soap*, 440.—*Appendix.* ————— 441











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B O O K I.

*Description of the Country of Anabuac, or a short Account of the Soil,  
Climate, Mountains, Rivers, Lakes, Minerals, Plants, Animals,  
and People of the Kingdom of Mexico.*

THE name of *Anabuac*, which was originally given to the Vale of Mexico only, from its principal cities having been situated on little islands, and upon the borders of two lakes, taking afterwards a more extensive signification, was used to denominate almost all that tract of land, which is known at present by the Name of *New Spain* (a).

This vast country was then divided into the kingdoms of Mexico, *Acolhuacan*, *Tlacopan*, and *Michuacan*; into the republics of *Tlaxcallan*, *Cholollan*, and *Huexotzinco*, and several other distinct states.

The kingdom of *Michuacan*, the most westerly of the whole, was bounded on the east and south by the Mexican dominions, on the

(a) *Anabuac* signifies near to the water, and from thence appears to be derived the name of *Anabuatlaca*, or *Nabuatlaca*, by which the polished nations occupying the banks of the Mexican lake have been known.



BOOK I. north by the country of the Chichemecas, and other more barbarous nations, and on the west by the lake of Chapallan, and some independent states. The capital *Tzintzuntzan*, called by the Mexicans *Huitzitzilla*, was situated on the eastern shore of the beautiful lake of *Pazcuaro*. Besides these two cities, there were others very considerable; namely, *Tiripitio*, *Zacapu*, and *Tarecuato*. All this country was pleasant, rich, and well inhabited.

The kingdom of Tlacopan, situated between Mexico and Michuacan, was of so small extent, that, excepting the capital of that name, it comprehended but a few cities of the Tepaneca nation, and the villages of the Mazahui, situated in the mountains to the west of the vale of Mexico.

The court of Tlacopan was on the western border of the lake of Tezcucó, four miles westward from that of Mexico (*b*).

The kingdom of Acolhuacan, the most ancient, and in former times the most extensive, was afterwards reduced to more narrow limits by the acquisitions of the Mexicans. It was bounded on the east by the republic of Tlaxcallan; on the south, by the province of Chalco, belonging to the kingdom of Mexico; on the north, by the country of the Huastecas; and in the west, it was also bounded by different states of Mexico, and terminated in the lake of Tezcucó. Its length from south to north was little more than two hundred miles, and its greatest breadth did not exceed sixty; but in this small district there were large cities, and a numerous population. The court of Tezcucó, situated upon the eastern bank of the lake of the same name, fifteen miles to the eastward of that of Mexico, was justly celebrated not less for its antiquity and grandeur than for the polish and civilization of its inhabitants. The three cities of *Huexotla*, *Coatlichan*, and *Atenco*, were so near adjacent, they appeared like its suburbs. *Otompan* was also a considerable city, and likewise *Acolman*, and *Tepepolco*.

The celebrated republic of Tlaxcallan or Tlascala, was bounded on the west by the kingdom of Acolhuacan, on the south by the repub-

(*b*) The Spaniards have altered the Mexican names, and adapted them to their own language, saying Tacuba, Oculma, Otumaba, Guaxuta, Tepeaca, Guatemala, Churabusco, &c. in place of Tlacopan, Acolman, Otompan, Huexotla, Tepejacac, Quauhquemallan, and Huitzilopochco, whose example we shall imitate, as far as it is convenient, to avoid giving our readers trouble in pronouncing them.

lics of Cholollan and Huexotzinco, and by the state of *Tepejacac*, belonging to the crown of Mexico, on the north by the state of *Zacatlan*, and on the east by other states under subjection to the same crown. Its length did not reach fifty miles, nor its breadth more than thirty. Tlascala, from whence the republic took its name, was situated on the side of the great mountain *Mattalcueye*, towards the north-west, and about seventy miles to the eastward of the court of Mexico.

The kingdom of Mexico, although the most modern, was far more extensive than all the other mentioned kingdoms and republics, taken together. It extended towards the south-west and south, as far as the Pacific Ocean; towards the south-east, as far as the neighbourhood of *Quauhquemallan*; towards the east, exclusive of the districts of the three republics, and a small part of the kingdom of Acolhuacan, as far as the Gulf of Mexico; towards the north, to the country of the Huastecas; towards the north-west, it bordered on the barbarous Chichemecas; and the dominions of Tlacopan and Michuacan, were its boundaries towards the east. The whole of the Mexican kingdom was comprehended between the 14th and 21st degrees of north latitude, and between 271 and 283 degrees of longitude, taken from the meridian of the island of Ferro (*c*).

The finest district of this country, in respect to advantage of situation, as well as population, was the vale itself of Mexico, crowned by beautiful and verdant mountains, whose circumference, measured at their base, exceeded a hundred and twenty miles. A great part of the vale is occupied by two lakes, the upper one of sweet water, the lower one brackish, which communicate together by a canal. In the lower lake, on account of its lying in the very bottom of the valley, all the water running from the mountains collected; from thence, when extraordinary abundance of rains raised the water of the lake over its bed, it easily overflowed the city of Mexico, which was situated in the lake; which accident happened not less frequently under the Mexican monarchy than in the time of the Spaniards. These two lakes the circumference of which is not less than ninety miles, represented

(*c*) De Solis, and other Spanish, French, and English writers, allow still more extent to the kingdom of Mexico; and Dr. Robertson says, that the territories belonging to the chiefs of Tezcucó and Tacuba, scarcely yielded in extent to those of the sovereign of Mexico; but how far these authors are distant from the truth, will appear from our dissertations.



## BOOK I.

in some degree, the figure of a camel, the head and neck of which were formed by the lake of sweet water, or *Chalco*, the body by the lake of brackish water, called the lake of *Tezcucu*, and the legs and feet were represented by the rivulets, and torrents, which ran from the mountains into the lake. Between the two lakes there is the little peninsula of *Itztapalapan*, which divides them. Besides the three courts of Mexico, Acolhuacan, and Tlacopan, there were forty eminent cities, in this delightful vale, and innumerable villages and hamlets. The cities most noted next to these courts were *Xochimilco*, *Chalco*, *Itztapalapan*, and *Quauhuitlan*, which now, however, scarcely retain a twentieth part of their former greatness (*d*).

Mexico, the most renowned of all the cities of the new world, and capital of the empire (the description of which we shall give in another place) was, like Venice, built on several little islands in the lake of Tezcucu, in 19 deg. and 26 min. of north latitude, and in 276 deg. and 34 min. of longitude, between the two courts of Tezcucu, and Tlacopan, 15 miles to the west of the one, and four to the east of the other. Some of its provinces were inland, others maritime.

SECT. II.  
Provinces of  
the kingdom  
of Mexico.

The principal inland provinces to the northward were, the Otomies; to the southwest, the Matlatzincas and the Cuiclatecas; to the south, the Tlahuicas and the Coahuixcas; to the south-east, after the states of *Itzocan*, *Jauhtepec*, *Quauhquechollan*, *Atlixco*, *Tehuacan*, and others, were the great provinces of the Mixtecas, the Zapotecas, and lastly, the Chiapanecas. Towards the east were the provinces of *Tepeyacac*, the Popolocas, and the Totonacas. The maritime provinces of the Mexican gulf were those of *Coatzacualco* and *Cuetlachtlan*, which the Spaniards call *Cotasta*. The provinces on the Pacific Ocean were those of *Coliman*, *Zacatlolan*, *Tototepec*, *Tecuatepec*, and *Xoconochco*.

The province of the Otomies commenced in the northern part of the Vale of Mexico, and extended through those mountains to the

(a) The other respectable cities of the Vale of Mexico were, *Mizquic*, *Cuiclabuac*, *Azcapotzalco*, *Tenayocan*, *Otompan*, *Colhuacan*, *Mexicaltzinco*, *Huitzilopochco*, *Coyobuacan*, *Atenco*, *Coatlchan*, *Huexotla*, *Chiautla*, *Acolman*, *Teotihuacan*, *Itztapalocan*, *Tepetlaoztoc*, *Tepepolco*, *Tizayocan*, *Cittlatepec*, *Coyotepec*, *Tzompanco*, *Toltitlan*, *Xaltocan*, *Tetepanco*, *Ebecatepec*, *Tequizquiac*, *Huipochtlan*, *Tepotzotlan*, *Tehuillojocan*, *Huehuetoca*, *Atlacuibuyan*, &c. See our Sixth Dissertation.

north,

north, the distance of 90 miles from the capital. The ancient and famous city of *Tollan*, now *Tula*, distinguished itself over all the inhabited places, of which there were many; also *Xilotēpec*, which after the conquest made by the Spaniards, was the metropolis of the Otomies. Beyond the settlements of this nation towards the north and north-west, there were no other places inhabited as far as New Mexico. All this great track of land of more than a thousand miles in length, was occupied by barbarous nations, who had no fixed residence, nor paid obedience to any sovereign.

The province of the Matlatzincas, comprehended besides the valley of Tolocan, all that space from thence to *Tlaximaloyan* (now *Taximaroa*), the frontier of the kingdom of Michuacan. The fertile valley of Tolocan from the south-east to the north-west is upwards of forty miles long, and thirty in breadth where it is broadest. Tolocan, which was the principal city of the Matlatzincas, from whence the valley took its name, was, as it still is, situated at the foot of a high mountain perpetually covered with snow, thirty miles distant from Mexico. All the other places of the valley were inhabited partly by the Matlatzincas, partly by the Otomies. In the neighbouring mountains there were the states of *Xalatlaubco*, *Tzompabuacan*, and *Malinalco*; at no great distance to the eastward of the valley the state of Ocuil-lan, and to the westward those of *Toxantla* and *Zoltepec*.

The Cuitlatecas inhabited a country which extended more than two hundred miles from the north-west to the south-east, from the kingdom of Michuacan, as far as the Pacific Ocean. Their capital was the great and populous city of Mexcaltepec upon the coast, the ruins of which are now scarcely visible.

The capital of the Tlahuicas was the pleasant and strong city of Quauhnhuac, called by the Spaniards Cuernabaca, about forty miles from Mexico towards the south. Their province, which commenced from the southern mountains of the vale of Mexico, extended almost sixty miles southward.

The great province of the Coahuixcas was bounded on the north by the Matlatzincas, and Tlahuicas, on the west by the Cuitlatecas, on the east by the Jopi and Mixtecas, and to the southward it extended itself as far as the Pacific Ocean, through that part where at present  
the



**BOOK I.** the port and city of Acapulco lie. This province was divided into several distinct states, namely, *Tzompanco*, *Chilapan*, *Tlapan*, and *Teoitztla*, now *Tistla*, a country for the most part too hot, and unhealthy. Tlachco, a place celebrated for its silver mines, either belonged to the above mentioned province, or bordered upon it.

Mixtecapan, or the province of the Mixtecas, extended itself from *Acatlan*, a place distant an hundred and twenty miles from the court, towards the south-east, as far as the Pacific Ocean, and contained several cities and villages, well inhabited, and of considerable trade. To the east of the Mixtecas, were the Zapotecas, so called from their capital Teotzapotlan. The valley of *Huaxyacac* was in their district, called by the Spaniards *Oaxaca*, or *Guaxaca*. The city of Huaxyacac, was afterwards constituted a bishoprick, and the valley a marquifate in favour of the conqueror D. Ferdinand Cortes (*e*).

To the northward of the Mixtecas was the province of *Mazatlan*, and to the northward and the eastward of the Zapotecas was *Chimantla*, with their capitals of the same name, from whence their inhabitants were called Mazatecas, and Chinantecas. The provinces of the Chiapanecas, Zoqui, and Queleni were the last of the Mexican empire towards the south-east. The principal cities of the Chiapanecas were *Tochiapan* (called by the Spaniards Chiapa de Indios), *Tochtla*, *Chamolla*, and *Tziuacantla*, of the Zoqui, *Tecpantla*, and of the Queleni, *Teopixca*. Upon the side and around the famous mountain *Popocatepec*, which is thirty-three miles distant towards the south-east from the court, were the great states *Amaquemecan*, *Tepoztlan*, *Jauhtepec*, *Huaxtepec*, *Chietlan*, *Itzocan*, *Acapetlayocan*, *Quaubquechollan*, *Atlixco*, *Cholollan*, and *Huexotzinco*; these two last, which were the most considerable, having, with the assistance of their neighbours the Tlascalans, shaken off the Mexican yoke, re-established their former aristocratical government. Cholollan, or Cholula, and

(*e*) Some believe, that anciently there was nothing in the place called Huaxyacac, but a mere garrison of the Mexicans, and that that city was founded by the Spaniards; but besides that it appears by the tribute-roll, that Huaxyacac was one of the tributary cities to the crown of Mexico, we know that the Mexicans were not accustomed to establish any garrison, except in the most populous places of their conquered provinces. The Spaniards were said to found a city whenever they gave a Spanish name to an Indian settlement, and gave it Spanish magistrates; *Antequera* in *Huaxyacac*, and *Segura della Frontera*, in *Tepojacac* were no otherwise founded.

Huexotzinco were the largest and most populous cities of all that land. The Cholulans possessed a small hamlet called Cuitlaxcoapan, in the very place where afterwards the Spaniards founded the city of Angelopolis, which is the second of New Spain (*f*).

To the east of Cholula there was the respectable state of Tepeyacac; and beyond that, the Popolocas, whose principal cities were *Tecamachalco* and *Quecholac*. To the southward of the Popolocas there was the state of *Tehuacan*, bordering upon the country of the Mixtecas; to the east the maritime province of *Cuetlachtlan*, and to the north the Totonacas. This great province, which was the last in that part of the empire, extended a hundred and fifty miles, beginning from the frontier of *Zacatlan*, a state belonging to the crown of Mexico, about eighty miles distant from the court, and terminating in the Gulf of Mexico. Besides the capital *Mixquibucan*, fifteen miles to the eastward of *Zacatlan*, there was the beautiful city of *Chempoallan* upon the coast of the Gulf, which was the first city of the empire entered by the Spaniards, and where, as will hereafter appear, their success began. These were the principal inland provinces of the Mexican empire; omitting the mention, at present, of several other lesser states, which might render our description tedious.

Among the maritime provinces of the Pacific Ocean, the most northern was Coliman; whose capital so called, lay in 19 deg. of latitude, and in 272 deg. of longitude. Pursuing the same coast, towards the south-east was the province of *Zacatlan*, with its capital of the same name; then the coast of the *Cuitlatecas*; and after it that of the *Cohuixcas*, in which district was *Acapulco*, at present a celebrated port for commerce with the Philippine Islands, in 16 deg. 40 min. of latitude, and 276 of longitude.

Adjoining to the coast of the *Cohuixcas*, were the *Jopi*; and adjoining to that, the *Mixtecas*, known in our time by the name of *Xicayan*. Then followed the great province of *Tecuan-tepec*; and lastly, that of *Xoconochco*. The city of *Tecuan-tepec*, from which the state derived its name, was situated on a beautiful little island,

(*f*) The Spaniards say *Tustla*, *Mecameca*, *Izucar*, *Atrisco* and *Quechula* in place of *Tochtlan*, *Amaquemecan*, *Itzocan*, *Atlixco*, and *Quecholac*.



## BOOK I.

formed by a river two miles from the sea. The province of Xoconochco, which was the last and most southerly of the empire, was bounded on the east and south-east by the country of *Xochitepec*, which did not belong to the crown of Mexico; on the west, by that of *Tecuatepec*; and on the south terminated in the ocean. Its capital, called also *Xoconochco*, was situated between two rivers, in 14 deg. of latitude, and in 283 of longitude. Upon the Mexican Gulf there were, besides the coast of the Totonacas, the provinces of *Cuetlachtlan* and *Coatzacualco*; this last was bounded on the east by the vast country of *Onobualco*, under which name the Mexicans comprehended the states of *Tabasco*, and the peninsula of *Yucatan*, which were not subject to their dominion. Besides the capital, called also *Coatzacualco*, founded upon the borders of a great river, there were other well-peopled places amongst which *Painalla* merits particular mention by having been the place of the nativity of the famous *Malintzin*, one of the most powerful instruments of the conquest of Mexico. The province of *Cuetlachtlan* which had a capital so called, comprehended all that coast which is between the river *Alvarado*, where the province of *Coatzacualco* terminates, and the river *Antigua* (*g*), where the province of the Totonacas began. On that part of the coast which the Mexicans called *Chalchicuecan*, lie at present the city and port of *Vera Cruz*, the most renowned of all New Spain.

All the country of *Anahuac*, generally speaking, was well peopled. In the history and in the dissertations we shall have occasion to mention several particular cities, and to give some idea of the multitude of their inhabitants. Almost all the inhabited settlements with their ancient names, are now still existing, though much altered; but all the ancient cities excepting those of Mexico or *Orizaba* and some others, appear so reduced, they hardly contain the fourth part of the number of buildings and inhabitants which they formerly possessed; there are many which have preserved but a tenth part, and others hardly the twentieth part of their ancient greatness.

To speak in general of the Indians, and comparing the state of their population, reported by the first Spanish historians, and their

(g) We give this river the Spanish name, by which it is known at present; as we are ignorant of its Mexican name.

native writers, with what we have seen ourselves, we can affirm that at present there hardly remains one-tenth part of the ancient inhabitants; the miserable consequence of the calamities they have undergone.

BOOK I.

The land is in great part abrupt and mountainous, covered with thick woods, and watered by large rivers; though not to be compared with those of South America: some of these run into the Gulf of Mexico, and others into the Pacific Ocean. Amongst the first, those of *Papaloapan*, *Coatzacualco*, and *Chiapan* are the greatest. The river Papaloapan, which the Spaniards call *Alvarado*, from the name of the first Spanish captain who sailed into it, has its principal source in the mountains of the Zapotecas, and after making a circuit through the province of Mazatlan, and receiving other smaller rivers and streams, is discharged into the Gulf by three navigable mouths, at thirty miles distance from Vera Cruz. The river Coatzacualco, which is also navigable, comes down from the mountains of the *Mixes*, and crossing the province of which it takes the name, empties itself into the ocean nigh to the country of Onohualco. The river Chiapan begins its course from the mountains called *Cuchumataneo*, which separate the diocese of Chiapan from that of Guatemala, crosses the province of its own name, and afterwards that of Onohualco, where it runs into the sea. The Spaniards call it *Tabasco*, which they also called that tract of land which unites the peninsula of Yucatan to the Mexican continent. They called it also the river *Grihalva*, from the commander of the first Spanish fleet who discovered it.

SECT. III.  
Rivers, lakes,  
and fountains.

Amongst the rivers which run into the Pacific Ocean *Tololotlan* is the most celebrated, called by the Spaniards *Guadalaxara*, or *great river*. It takes its rise in the mountains of the valley of Toloacan, crosses the kingdom of Michuacan and the lake of Chapallan, from thence it waters the country of *Tonollan*, where at present the city of Guadalaxara, the capital of New Galicia, stands; and after running a course of more than six hundred miles, discharges itself into the ocean, in the latitude of 22 degrees. The river Tecuantepec springs in the mountains of the Mixes, and after a short course empties itself into the ocean in the latitude of  $15\frac{1}{2}$  degrees.



## BOOK I.

The river of the Jopi waters the country of that nation, and flows out fifteen miles to the eastward of the port of Acapulco; forming in that quarter the dividing line between the dioceses of Mexico and Angelopoli.

There were besides, and still are, several lakes, which did not less embellish the country than give convenience to the commerce of those people. The lake of Nicaragua, of Chapallan, and Pazquaro, which were the most considerable, did not belong to the Mexican empire. Amongst the others, the most important to our history, are those two in the vale of Mexico, which we have already spoken of. The lake of Chalco extended twelve miles from east to west, as far as the city of Xochimilco, and from thence taking, for as many miles, a northerly direction, incorporated itself by means of a canal, with the lake of Tetzcuco; but its breadth did not exceed six miles.

The lake of Tetzcuco extended fifteen miles, or rather seventeen from east to west, and something more from south to north; but at present its extent is much less, for the Spaniards have diverted into new channels many rivers which formerly ran into it. All the water which assembles there is at first sweet, and becomes salt afterwards, from the nitrous bed of the lake where it is received (*b*). Besides these two great lakes, there were in the same vale of Mexico, and to the north of the coast, two smaller ones, named after the cities of Tzompanco, and Xaltocan. The lake of Tochtlan, in the province of Coatzacualco, makes a sweet prospect, and its banks a most delightful dwelling. With respect to fountains, there are so many in that land, and so different in quality, they would deserve a separate history, especially if we had to enumerate those of the kingdom of Michuacan. There are an infinity of nitrous, sulphureous, vitriolic, and alluminous mineral waters, some of which

(*b*) M. de Bomare says, in his Dictionary of Natural History, that the salt of the Mexican lake may proceed from the waters of the ocean in the north being filtered through the earth; and to corroborate his opinion he quotes *Le Journal des Sçavans*, of the year 1676. But this is truly a gross error, because that lake is one hundred and eighty miles distant from the ocean; besides, the bed of this lake is so elevated, that it has at least one mile of perpendicular height above the level of the sea. The anonymous author of the work intitled, *Observations curieuses sur le Lac de Mexique*, (the work expressly from which the journalists of Paris have made their extracts,) is very far from adopting the error of M. de Bomare.

spring out so hot, that in a few moments any kind of fruit or animal food is boiled in them. There are also petrifying waters, namely those of Tehuacan, a city about one hundred and twenty miles distant from Mexico towards the south-east, those of the spring of Pucuario in the states of the Conte di Miravalles, in the kingdom of Michuacan, and that of a river in the province of the Queleni. With the water of Pucuario they make little white smooth stones, not displeasing to the taste; scrapings from which taken in broth, or in Atolli (*i*) are most powerful diaphoretics, and are used with remarkable success in various kinds of fevers (*k*). The citizens of Mexico during the time of their kings, supplied themselves with water from the great spring of Chapoltepec, which was conveyed to the city by an aqueduct, of which, we shall speak hereafter. In mentioning the waters of that kingdom, if the plan of our history would permit, we might describe the stupendous falls or cascades of several rivers (*l*), and the bridges which nature has formed over others, particularly the *Ponte di Dio*: thus they call in that country a vast volume of earth thrown across the deep river Atoyaque, close to the village of Molcaxac, about one hundred miles to the south-east from Mexico, along which, coaches and carriages conveniently pass. It is probable, it has been a fragment of a neighbouring mountain, thrown from it by some former earthquake.

The climate of the countries of Anahuac varies according to their situation. The maritime countries are hot, and for the most part moist and unhealthy. Their heat, which occasions sweat even in January, is owing to the perfect flatness of the coasts compared with the inland country; or from the mountains of sand that gather upon the shore, which is the case with Vera Cruz my native country. The moisture proceeds not less from the sea than from the abundance of waters descending from the mountains which

SECT. IV.  
Climate of  
Anahuac.

(*i*) Atolli is the name given by the Mexicans, to a gruel made of maize or Indian corn; of which we shall speak in another place.

(*k*) The little stones of Pucuario have been known but a short time. I have myself been an eye witness of their wonderful effect, in the epidemic of 1762. The dose prescribed for one who is easily brought to sweat is one drachm of the scrapings.

(*l*) Amongst the cascades there is one famous, made by the great river Guadalaxara, in a place called Tempizque, fifteen miles to the southward of that city.



## BOOK I.

command the coast. In hot countries there is never any white frost, and most inhabitants of such regions have no other idea of snow than that which they receive from the reading of books, or the accounts of strangers. Lands which are very high, or very near to very high mountains which are perpetually covered with snow, are cold; and I have been upon a mountain not more than twenty-five miles, removed from the capital, where there has been white frost and ice even in the dog-days. All the other inland countries, where the greatest population prevailed, enjoy a climate so mild and benign, they neither feel the rigour of winter, nor the heats of summer. It is true, in many of these countries there is frequently white frost in the three months of December, January, and February, and sometimes even it snows; but the small inconvenience which such cold occasions, continues only till the rising sun: no other fire than his rays, is necessary to give warmth in winter; no other relief is wanted in the season of heat, but the shade; the same clothing which covers men in the dog-days, defends them in January; and the animals sleep all the year under the open sky.

This mildness and agreeableness of climate under the torrid zone, is the effect of several natural causes, entirely unknown to the ancients, who believed it uninhabitable; and not well understood by some moderns, by whom it is esteemed unfavourable to those who live in it. The purity of the atmosphere, the smaller obliquity of the solar rays, and the longer stay of this luminary upon the horizon in winter, in comparison of other regions farther removed from the equator, concur to lessen the cold, and to prevent all that horror which disfigures the face of nature in other climes. During that season, a serene sky and the natural delights of the country, are enjoyed; whereas under the frigid, and even for the most part under the temperate zones, the clouds rob man of the prospect of heaven, and the snow buries the beautiful productions of the earth. No less causes, combine to temper the heat of summer. The plentiful showers which frequently water the earth after mid-day, from April or May, to September or October; the high mountains continually loaded with snow, scattered here and there through the country of Anahuac; the cool winds which breathe from them in that season;  
and

and the shorter stay of the sun upon the horizon, compared with the circumstances of the temperate zone, transform the summer of those happy countries into a cool and chearful spring.

But the agreeableness of the climate is counterbalanced by thunder storms, which are frequent in summer, particularly in the vicinity of Matlalcueje or the mountain of Tlascala, and by earthquakes which at all times are felt, although with less danger than terror. These first and last effects are occasioned by the sulphur and other combustible materials, deposited in great abundance in the bowels of the earth. Storms of hail are neither more frequent nor more severe than in Europe.

The fire kindled in the bowels of the earth by the sulphureous and bituminous materials, has made vents for itself in some of the mountains or volcanos, from whence flames are often seen to issue, and ashes and smoke. There are five mountains in the district of the Mexican empire, where at different times this dreadful phenomenon has been observed. *Pojauhtecatl*, called by the Spaniard, *Volcan d'Orizaba*, began to send forth smoke, in the year 1545, and continued to do so for twenty years: but after that, for the space of more than two centuries, there has not been observed the smallest sign of burning. This celebrated mountain, which is of a conical figure, is indisputably the highest land of all Anahuac; and on account of its height, is the first land descried by seamen who are steering that way, at the distance of fifty leagues (*m*). Its top is always covered with snow, and its border adorned with large cedar, pine, and other trees of valuable wood, which make the prospect of it every way beautiful. It is distant from the capital upwards of ninety miles to the eastward.

SECT. V.  
Mountains,  
Stones, and  
Minerals.

The *Popocatepec* and *Iztaccibuatl*, which lay near each other, but thirty-three miles distant from Mexico towards the south-east, are also of a surprising height. *Popocatepec*, for which they have substituted

(*m*) *Pojauhtecatl* is higher than Taide or the Peak of Teneriffe, according to P. Tallandier the Jesuit, who made observations on them both: *vide Lettres Edifiantes*, &c. Thomas Gage says of the *Popocatepec*, it is as high as the highest Alps: he might have added, something higher, if he had calculated the elevated station on which this celebrated mountain rises.



BOOK I. the name *Volcan*, has a mouth or vent more than half a mile wide, from which, in the time of the Mexican kings, it frequently emitted flames; and in the last century many times threw out great quantities of ashes upon the places adjacent; but in this century, hardly any smoke has been observed. *Iztaccibuatl*, known by the Spaniards under the name of Sierra Nevada, threw out also at sometimes smoke and ashes. Both mountains have their tops always covered with snow in so great quantities, as to supply with what precipitates on the neighbouring rocks, the cities of Mexico, Gelopoli, Cholula, and other adjoining places, to the distance of forty miles from these mountains, where an incredible quantity is yearly consumed in cooling and congealing liquors (*n*).

The mountains of Coliman and Tochtlan, considerably distant from the capital, and still more so from each other, have emitted fire at different periods, in our time (*o*).

Besides these mountains there are likewise others, which, though not burning mountains, are yet of great celebrity for their height; namely, Matlalcueye, or the mountain of Tlascala; *Nappateuctli*, called by the Spaniards, from its figure, *Cofre* or trunk; *Tentzon*,

(*n*) The impost or duty upon ice or congealed snow consumed in the capital, amounted in 1746, to 15,522 Mexican crowns; some years after, it rose to 20,000, and at present we may believe it is a great deal more.

(*o*) A few years ago an account was published in Italy, concerning the mountains of Tochtlan or Fusila, full of curious, but too ridiculous lies; in which there was a description of rivers of fire, of frightful elephants, &c. We do not mention among the burning mountains, neither *Juruyo*, nor *Mamotombo*, of Nicaragua; nor that of *Guatemala*; because neither of these three was comprehended under the Mexican dominions. That of *Guatemala*, laid in ruins with earthquakes, that great and beautiful city, the 29th of July, 1773. With respect to *Juruyo*, situated in the valley of Urecho, in the kingdom of Michuacan, before the year 1760, there was nothing of it but a small hill where there was a sugar plantation. But on the 29th of September, 1760, it burst with furious shocks, and entirely ruined the sugar work, and the neighbouring village of *Guacana*; and from that time has continued to emit fire and burning rocks, which have formed themselves into three high mountains, whose circumference was nearly six miles, in 1766, according to the account communicated to me, by Don Emmanuelle di Bustamante, governor of that province, and an eye-witness of the fact. The ashes at the eruption, were forced as far as the city of Queretaro, one hundred and fifty miles distant from *Juruyo*, a matter almost incredible, but public and notorious in that city; where a gentleman shewed me, in a paper, the ashes which he had gathered. In the city of Valladolid, sixty miles distant, it rained ashes in such abundance they were obliged to sweep the yards of the houses two or three times during the day.

near

near to the village of Moacaxac, Toloacan, and others, which, being of no importance to the subject, I intentionally omit. Every one knows that the famous chain of the Andes, or Alps of South America, are continued through the isthmus of Panama, and through all New Spain till they lose themselves in the unknown countries of the North. The most considerable part of this chain is known in that kingdom under the name of *Sierra Madre*, particularly in Cinaloa, and Tarahumara, provinces twelve hundred miles distant from the capital.

The mountains of Anahuac abound in ores of every kind of metal, and an infinite variety of other fossils. The Mexicans found gold in the countries of the Coahuixcas, the Mixtecas, the Zapotecas, and in several others. They gathered this precious metal chiefly in grains amongst the sand of the rivers, and the above mentioned people paid a certain quantity in tribute to the crown of Mexico. Silver was dug out of the mines of Tlachco, Tzompanco, and others; but it was not so much prized by them as it is by other nations. Since the conquest, so many silver mines have been discovered in that country, especially in the provinces which are to the north-west of the capital, it is quite impossible to enumerate them. Of copper they had two sorts, one hard, which they used instead of iron to make axes, hatchets, mattocks, and other instruments of war and agriculture; the other flexible, for making of basons, pots, and other vessels. This metal abounded formerly more than elsewhere in the provinces of Zacatollan, and the Coahuixchas; at present it abounds in the kingdom of Michuacan.

They dug tin from the mines of Tlachco, and lead from the mines of *Ixmiquilpan*, a place in the country of the Otomies. Of tin they made money, as we shall observe in its place, and we know of lead that it was sold at market, but we are entirely ignorant of the use it was put to; there were likewise mines of iron in Tlascala, in Tlachco, and other places; but they either did not find out these mines, or at least did not know how to benefit themselves by the discovery. There were also in Chilapan mines of quicksilver, and in many places mines of sulphur, alum, vitriol, cinnabar, ochre, and a white earth strongly resembling white lead. Of quicksilver and vitriol we do not know the use which they made; the other minerals were employed in painting and dying. Of amber and asphaltum, or bitumen of Judea, there

was



## BOOK I.

was and still is great abundance on both coasts, and they were both paid in tribute to the king of Mexico from many places of the empire. Amber they used to set in gold for ornament ; asphaltum was employed in certain incense offerings, as we shall find hereafter.

With respect to precious stones there were, and still are, diamonds, though few in number ; amethysts, cats-eyes, turquoises, cornelians, and some green stones resembling emeralds, and not much inferior to them ; and of all these stones, the Mixtecas, the Zapotecas, and Cohuixcas, in whose mountains they were found, paid a tribute to the king. Of their plenty and estimation with the Mexicans, and the manner in which they wrought them, we shall speak more properly in another place. The mountains which lay on the coast of the gulf of Mexico, between the port of Vera Cruz and the river Coatzacoalco, namely, those of Chinantla, and the province of Mixtecas, furnished them with crystal ; and the cities of Tochtepec, Cuatlachtlan, Cozamaloapan, and others, were obliged to contribute annually to the luxury of the court.

These mountains did not less abound in various kinds of stone, valuable in architecture, sculpture, and other arts. There are quarries of jasper, and marble of different colours in the mountains of Calpolalpan to the east of Mexico ; in those which separate the two vallies of Mexico and Toloacan, now called *Monte de los Cruzes*, and in those of the Zapotecas : of alabaster in Tecalco (at present *Tecale*), a place in the neighbourhood of the province of Tepeyacac, and in the country of the Mixtecas : of Tezontli, in the vale itself of Mexico, and in many other places of the empire. The stone Tetzontli is generally of a dark red colour, pretty hard, porous, and light, unites most firmly with lime and sand, and is therefore more in demand than any other for the buildings of the capital, where the foundation is marshy and unsolid. There are besides entire mountains of loadstone, and among others one very considerable between Teoitztlan and Chilapan, in the country of the Cohuixcas. Of *Quetzalitztl* commonly known by the name of the nephritic stone, the Mexicans formed various and curious figures, some of which are preserved in different museums of Europe. *Chimaltizatl*, which is a kind of talc, is a transparent white stone, dividing easily into thin leaves ;

on

on calcination gives a fine plaister, which the ancient Mexicans used to whiten their paintings. There are besides infinite quantities of plaister and talc; but respecting this last we do not know what use it was put to. The *Mezcuitletl*, that is, moon's-dung, belongs to that class of stones which, on account of their resistance to the action of fire, are called by chemists *lapides refractarii*. It is transparent and of a reddish gold colour. But no stone was more common with the Mexicans than the *itztli*, of which there is great abundance in many places of Mexico. It is semitransparent, of a glassy substance, and generally black, but it is found also white and blue; they made looking-glasses of this stone, knives, lancets, razors, and spears, as we shall mention when we treat of their militia; and after the introduction of the gospel they made sacred stones of it which were much valued (*p*).

However plentiful and rich the mineral kingdom of Mexico may be, the vegetable kingdom is still more various and abundant. The celebrated Dr. Hernandez, the Pliny of New Spain, describes in his Natural History, about twelve hundred plants, natives of that country; but his description, although large, being confined to medicinal plants, has hardly comprised one part of what provident nature has produced there for the benefit of mortals. Of the medicinal plants we should give but an imperfect account if we applied to the medicine of the Mexicans. With regard to the other classes of vegetables, some are esteemed for their flowers, some for their fruit, some for their leaves, some for their root, some for their trunk or their wood, and others for their gum, resin, oil, or juice (*q*). Among the many flowers which embellish the meads and adorn the gardens of the Mexicans, there are some worthy to be mentioned, either from the singular beauty of their colours, the exquisite fragrance which they exhale, or the extraordinaryness of their form.

Sect. VI.  
Plants esteemed  
for their  
flowers.

The *Floripundio* which, on account of its size, merits the first mention, is a beautiful white odoriferous flower, monopetalous, or consist-

(*p*) Itztli is known in South America by the name of the *Pietra del Galinazzo*. The celebrated Mr. Caylus proves, in a manuscript Dissertation, which Mr. Bomare has cited, that the *obsidiana*, of which the ancients made their *vasei murini*, which were so much esteemed, was entirely similar to this stone.

(*q*) We have adopted this though imperfect division of plants, as it appears the most suitable and adapted to the plan of our history.



## BOOK I.

ing of one leaf, but so large, in length it is full more than eight inches, and its diameter in the upper part three or four. Many hang together from the branches like bells, but not entirely round as their corolla (*r*), has five or six angles equidistant from each other. These flowers are produced by a pretty little tree, the branches of which form a round top like a dome. Its trunk is tender, its leaves large, angular, and of a pale green colour. The flowers are followed by round fruit as large as oranges, which contain an almond.

The Jollocxochitl (*s*), or flower of the heart, is also large, and not less estimable for its beauty than for its odour, which is so powerful, that a single flower is sufficient to fill a whole house with the most pleasing fragrance. It has many petals, which are glutinous, externally white, internally reddish or yellowish, and disposed in such a manner, that when the flower is open and its petals expanded, it has the appearance of a star, but when shut it resembles in some measure a heart, from whence its name arose. The tree which bears it is tolerably large, and its leaves long and rough.

The Coatzontecoxochitl, or flower with the viper's head, is of incomparable beauty (*t*). It is composed of five petals or leaves, purple in the innermost part, white in the middle, the rest red but elegantly stained with yellow and white spots. The plant which bears it has leaves resembling those of the iris, but longer and larger, its trunk is small and slim; this flower was one of the most esteemed amongst the Mexicans.

The Oceloxochitl, or tyger-flower, is large, composed of three pointed petals, and red, but towards the middle of a mixed white and yellow, representing in some degree the spots of that wild animal from which it takes its name. The plant has leaves also resembling those of the iris, and a bulbous root.

(*r*) The coloured leaves of which the flower is composed are called *petals* by Fabio Colonna, and *corolla* by Linnæus, to distinguish them from the real leaves.

(*s*) There is another Jolloxochitl also exceedingly fragrant, but different in form.

(*t*) *Flos forma spectabilis, et quam vix quispiam possit verbis exprimere, aut penecillo prodignitate imitari, a principibus Indorum ut naturæ miraculum valde expetitus, et in magno habitus pretio. Hernandez Histor. Nat. N. Hispaniæ, lib. viii. c. 8. The Lincean Academicians of Rome, who commented on and published this History of Hernandez in 1651, and saw the paintings of this flower, with its colours, executed in Mexico, conceived such an idea of its beauty that they adopted it as the emblem of their very learned academy, denominating it *Flori di Lince*.*

*Tolloxochitl*



*Coatzontecoxochitl*



*Xiloxochitl*



*Oceloxochitl*



*Macpalxochitl*







The *Cacaloxochitl*, or raven-flower is small, but very fragrant, and coloured white, red, and yellow. The tree which produces these flowers appears covered all over with them, forming at the end of the branches natural bunches not less pleasing to the sight than grateful to the sense. In hot countries there is nothing more common than these flowers; the Indians adorn their altars with them; and the Spaniards make excellent preserves of them (*u*).

The *Izquioxochitl* is a small white flower, resembling in figure the cynorrhodo, or wood-rose, and in flavour the garden-rose, but much superior to it in fragrance. It grows to a great tree.

The *Chempoalochitl*, or *Chempascubil*, as the Spaniards say, is that flower transplanted to Europe which the French call Oeillet d'Inde, or Indian carnation. It is exceedingly common in Mexico, where they call it also Flower of the Dead; and there are several kinds differing in size, in figure, and in the number of petals of which they are composed.

The flower which the Mexicans call *Xiloxochitl*, and the Miztecas *Tiata*, is entirely composed of thin, equal, and strait threads, but pliant and about six inches long, springing from a round cup something resembling an acorn, but different in size, in colour, and substance. Some of these beautiful flowers are entirely red, others all white, and the tree which bears them is most beautiful.

The *Macphalxochitl*, or flower of the hand, is like a tulip, but its pistillum represents the form of a bird's foot, or rather that of an ape, with six fingers terminated with as many nails. The vulgar Spaniards of that kingdom call the tree which bears these curious flowers *Arbol de Manitas*.

Besides these and innumerable other flowers, natives of that country, which the Mexicans delighted to cultivate, the land of Mexico has been enriched with all those which could be transported from Asia and Europe, such as lilies, jessamines, carnations of different kinds, and others in great numbers, which at present in the gardens of Mexico rival the flowers of America.

With regard to fruits, the country of Anahuac is partly indebted to the Canary Islands, partly to Spain, for water melons, apples, peaches,

SECT. VII.  
Plants valued  
for their fruit.

(*u*) It is probable that this tree is the same which Bomare describes under the name of *Frangipavier*.



## BOOK I.

quinces, apricots, pears, pomegranates, figs, black-cherries, walnuts, almonds, olives, chesnuts, and grapes; although these last were not altogether wanting in the country (*x*). In Mizteca there are two kinds of wild vine original in the country: the one in the shoots and figure of the leaves similar to the common vine, produces red grapes, large, and covered with a hard skin, but of a sweet and grateful taste, which would certainly improve from culture. The grape of the other vine is hard, large, and of a very harsh taste, but they make an excellent conserve of it.

With respect to the cocoa-tree, the plaintain, the citron, orange, and lemon, I am persuaded, from the testimony of Oviedo, Hernandez, and Bernal Dias, that they had the cocoa from the Philippine Islands, and the rest from the Canaries (*y*); but as I know there are many of another opinion, I decline engaging myself in any dispute; because, besides its being a matter of no importance to me, it would force me to deviate from the line of my history. It is certain, that these trees, and all others which have been imported there from elsewhere, have successfully taken root, and multiplied as much as in their native soil. All the maritime countries abound with coconut trees. Of oranges, there are seven different kinds, and of lemons only four. There are as many of the plaintain, or *platano*, as the Spaniards call it (*z*). The largest, which is the zapalot, is from  
fifteen

(*x*) The places named *Parras* and *Parral* in the diocese of New Biscaglia, had these names from the abundance of vines which were found there, of which they made many vineyards, which at this day produce good wine.

(*y*) Oviedo, in his Natural History, attests, that F. J. Bulangas, a Dominican, was the first who brought the Musa from the Canaries to Hispaniola, in 1516; and from thence it was transplanted to the continent of America. Hernandez, in the third book, chap. 40. of his Natural History, speaks thus of the cocoa: *Nascitur passim apud Orientales et jam quoque apud Occidentales Indos*. B. Dias in his History of the Conquest, chap. 17. says, he sowed in the country of Coatzacoalco, seven or eight orange seeds; and these, he adds, were the first oranges ever planted in New Spain. With regard to the musa, of the four species which there are of it, it is probable, one of them only is foreign, which is called *Guineo*.

(*z*) The musa was not altogether unknown to the ancients. Pliny, in citing the account which the soldiers of Alexander the Great gave of all that they saw in India, gives this description of it: *Major et alia (arbos) pomo et suavitate præcellentior, quo sapientes Indorum vivunt. Folium avium alas imitatur, longitudine cubitorum trium, latitudine duum. Fructum cortice emittit admirabilem succi dulcedine, ut uno quartenos satiet. Arbori nomen palce, pomo anient*. Hist. Nat. lib. xii. cap. 6. Besides these specific characters of the musa he subjoins further, that the name *Palan*, which was given to the musa in those remote times, is still preserved in Malabar, as Garzia dell' Orto, a learned Portuguese physician, bears witness, who resided there many years. It is to be suspected whether *Platano* or plantain has been derived from the word

*Palan*

fifteen to twenty inches in length, and about three in diameter. It is hard and little esteemed, and is only eat when roasted or boiled. The *Platano largo*, that is *long*, is eight inches at the most in length, and one and a half in diameter. The skin at first is green, then yellow, and when perfectly ripe, black or blackish. It is a relishing and wholesome fruit, whether boiled or raw. The *Guinco* is smaller than the other, but richer, softer, more delicious, and less wholesome. The fibres which cover the pulp are flatulent. This species of plantain has been cultivated in the public garden of Bologna, and we have tasted it, but found it so unripe and unpalatable on account of the climate, that it might have been supposed to be a quite different species. The *Dominico* is the smallest and likewise the most delicate. The tree also is smaller than the others. In that country there are whole woods of large extent not only of the plantain, but also of oranges and lemons; and in Michuacan there is a considerable commerce with the dried plantains, which are preferable to raisins or figs.

The fruits which are unquestionably original in that country are the pine-apple, which from being at first view like to the pine-tree, was called by the Spaniards *Piña*. The Mamei, Chirimoya (*a*), Anona, Cabeza di Negro, black Zapote, Chicozapote, white Zapote, yellow Zapote, Zapote di S. Dominico, Ahuacate, Guayaba, Capulino, Guava, or Cuaxinicuil, Pitahaya, Papaya, Guanabana, Noce Encarcelado, Plums, Dates, Chajoti, Tilapo, Obo or Hobo, Nance, Cacahuate, and many others unimportant to be known by the reader. Most of these fruits are described in the works of Oviedo, Acofta, Hernandez, Laet, Nieremberg, Marcgrave, Pifon, Barrere; Sloane,

*Palan.* The name Bananas, which the French give it, is the same as it bears in Guinea, and the name Musa, which the Italians give it, is taken from the Arabic. By some it has been called the Fruit of Paradise, and even some are persuaded it is the very fruit which made our first parents transgress.

(*a*) Several European writers on the affairs of America, confound the Chirimoya with the Arcona and Guanabana: but they are three distinct species of fruits; although the two first are somewhat resembling each other. It is necessary also to guard against confounding the pine-apple with the Anona; which are more different from each other than the cucumber and melon. Bomare, however, makes two distinct fruits of the Chirimoya and Cherimolia, whereas Cherimolia is only the corruption of the first and original name of the fruit. The Ate likewise, which some judge a fruit different from the Cherimoya, is only a variety of the same species.



BOOK I. Ximenes, Ulloa, and many other naturalists; we shall therefore only take notice of those which are the least known in Europe.

All the fruits comprehended by the Mexicans under the generic name of Tzapotl, are round or approach to roundness; and all have a hard stone (*b*). The black Zapote, has a green, light, smooth, tender bark; a black, soft, and most exceeding savoury pulp, which at first sight looks like the Cassia (*c*). Within the pulp, it has flat, blackish stones, not longer than a finger. It is perfectly round, and its diameter from one and a half, to four or five inches. The tree is of a moderate size and thickness, with small leaves. Ice of the pulp of this fruit, seasoned with sugar and cinnamon, is of a most delicate taste.

The white Zapote, which from its narcotic virtue, was called by the Mexicans Cochitzapotl, is something similar to the black, in size, figure, and colour of the bark; although in the white the green is more clear; but in other respects they are greatly different. Its stone, which is believed to be poisonous, is large, round, hard, and white. The tree is thick, and larger than the black; and its leaves also are larger. Besides, the black is peculiar to a warm climate; but the white, on the contrary, belongs to the cold and temperate climates.

The Chicozapote, (in Mexican, *Chicitzapotl*) is of a spherical shape, or approaching thereto; and is one and a half, or two inches in diameter. Its skin is grey, the pulp white, and the stones black, hard, and pointed. From this fruit, when it is still green, they draw a glutinous milk, which easily condenses, called by the Mexicans, *Chicli*; and by the Spaniards, *Chicle*: the boys and girls chew it; and in Colima they form it into small statues, and other fanciful little figures (*d*).

(*b*) The fruits comprehended by the Mexicans under the name of Tzapotl, are the Mammei *Tetzontzapotl*, the Chirimoya *Matzapotl*, the Anona *Quanhitzapotl*, the black Zapotl *Tliltzapotl*, &c.

(*c*) Gemelli says, the black Zapotl has also the taste of the Cassia: but this is very far from being true, which all who have tasted it must know. He says also, that this fruit when crude, is poison to fish, but it is wonderful that such a fact should be known only to Gemelli, who was not more than ten months in Mexico.

(*d*) Gemelli is persuaded that chicle was a composition made on purpose; but he is deceived, for it is nothing else than the mere milk of the unripe fruit condensed by the air. — Tom. 6. lib. ii. cap. 1c.

The

The Chicozapote, fully ripe, is one of the most delicious fruits; and by many Europeans reckoned superior to any fruit in Europe. The tree is moderately large, its wood fit for being wrought, and its leaves are round, in colour and consistence like those of the orange. It springs without culture in hot countries; and in Mixteca, Huasteca, and Michuacan, there are woods of such trees twelve and fifteen miles long (*e*).

The Capollino or Capulin, as the Spaniards call it, is the cherry of Mexico. The tree is little different from the cherry tree of Europe; and the fruit is like it in size, colour, and stone, but not in taste.

The Nance is a small, round fruit; yellow, aromatic, and savoury, with extremely small seeds, which grow into trees peculiar to warm climates.

The Chayoti is a round fruit, similar in the husk, with which it is covered, to the chesnut, but four or five times larger, and of a much deeper green colour. Its kernel is of a greenish white, and has a large stone in the middle, which is white, and like it in substance. It is boiled, and the stone eat with it. This fruit is produced by a twining perennial plant, the root of which is also good to eat.

The imprisoned nut, commonly so called, because its kernel is closely shut up within an exceeding hard stone. It is smaller than the common nut; and its figure resembles the nutmeg. Its stone is smooth, and its kernel less, and not so well tasted as the common one. This (*f*) transported from Europe, has multiplied and become as common as in Europe itself.

The *Tlalcacahuatl*, or Cacahuate as the Spaniards call it, is one of the most scarce plants which grow there. It is an herb, but very thick, and strongly supplied with roots. Its leaves are something

(*e*) Amongst the ridiculous lies told by Thomas Gage, is the following, that in the garden of S. Giacinto, (the hospital of the Dominicans of the Mission from the Philippine isles, in the suburbs of Mexico where he lodged several months,) there were Chicozapoti. This fruit could never be raised either in the vale of Mexico or any other country subject to white frost.

(*f*) We only speak of the imprisoned nut of the Mexican empire, as the one of New Mexico is larger and better tasted than the common one of Europe, as I have been informed from respectable authority. Probably this of New Mexico is the same with that of Louisiana, called *Pacana*, or *Pacaria*.



BOOK I.

like purslain, but not so gross. Its flowerets are white, which bring no fruit. Its fruit are not borne on the branches or stem as in other plants, but attached to the junction of the roots, within a white, greyish, long, roundish, wrinkled sheath, and as rough as we have represented it in our third figure of fruits and flowers. Every sheath has two or three Cacahuati, which are in figure like pine-seeds, but larger and grosser; and each is composed, like other seeds, of two *lobi*; and has its germinating point. It is fit for eating, and well tasted when not raw but only a little toasted. If they are much toasted, they acquire a smell and taste so like coffee, any one may be deceived by it. Oil is made from the Cacahuati, which is not ill tasted; but it is believed to be unwholesome because it is very hot. It makes a beautiful light, but is easily extinguished. This plant would thrive, with certainty, in Italy. It is sown in March or April, and the fruit is gathered in October or November.

Among many other fruits, which I pass over to shorten my account, I cannot dispense with the mention of the cocoa, the cocoa nut, vainilla, chia, chilli or great pepper, Tomati, the pepper of Tabasco, cotton, grain, and leguminous plants which are most common with the Mexicans.

Of the Cocoa nuts, (a name taken from the Mexican word *Cacahuatl*,) Hernandez enumerates four species; but the *Tlalcacahuatl*, the smallest of the whole, was the one most used by the Mexicans in their chocolate and other daily drink; the other species served more as money to traffic with in the market, than aliment. The Cocoa nut was one of the plants most cultivated in the warm countries of that empire; and many provinces paid it in tribute to the crown of Mexico; and amongst others the province of Xoconochco, whose Cocoa-nut is excellent and better than that of Maddalena. The description of this celebrated plant, and its culture, is to be found in many authors of every polished nation in Europe.

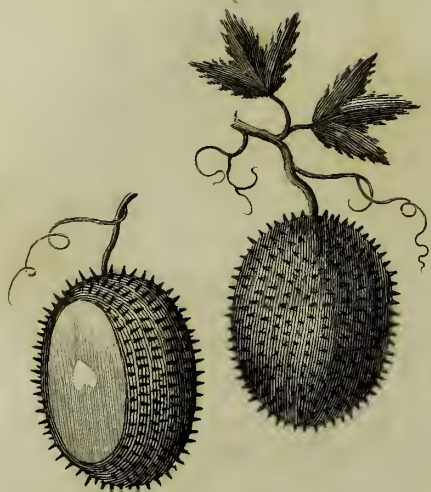
The Vainilla or Vainiglia, so well known and much used in Europe, grows without culture, in warm countries. The ancient Mexicans made use of it in their chocolate and other drinks which they made of the cocoa.

The





*Chajotli*



*Tiltzapoti*



*Talcacahuatl*



*Nopalxochquetzalli*



The Chia is the small seed of a beautiful plant, whose stem is strait and quadrangular; the branches extended in four directions, and symmetrically placed opposite each other, with blue flowerets. There are two species of it, the one black and small, from which there is an oil drawn admirable for painting; the other white and larger, of which they make a cooling beverage. Both were used by the Mexicans for these and other purposes, which we shall mention hereafter.

Of Chilli or great Pepper (*g*), which was as much in use with the Mexicans as salt in Europe, there are at least eleven species, different in their size, figure and sharpness. The Quauhchilli, which is the fruit of a shrub, and Chiltecpin are the smallest, but also the most sharp. Of the Tomate there are six species, distinguished by their size, colour, and taste. The largest, which is the Xictomatl or Xitomate, as the Spaniards of Mexico call it, is now very common in Europe, in Spain, and France, under the name of *Tomate*; and in Italy, under the name of Pomo-d'oro. The Miltomatl is smaller, green, and perfectly round. How much both were used by the Mexicans at their meals, shall be mentioned when we treat of their diet.

The Xocoxochitl, vulgarly known by the name of Pepe di Tabasco, from its abounding in that province, is larger than the pepper of Malabar. It grows on a large tree, whose leaves have the colour and lustre of those of the orange; and the flowers are of a beautiful red, and similar in figure to those of the pomegranate, and of a most penetrating and pleasing scent, of which the branches also partake. The fruit is round and borne in clusters which at first are green, afterwards become almost black. This pepper, used formerly by the ancient Mexicans, may supply the want of that of Malabar.

Cotton, from its utility, was one of the most valuable productions of that country, as it served instead of flax (although this plant was not wanting to them), and the inhabitants of Anahuac were generally clothed in it (*b*). There is white and tawny-coloured cotton, vulgarly

(*g*) In other countries of America the Chilli is called Axi; in Spain, Pimiento; in France, Poivre de Guinée, and by other names.

(*b*) Michuacan, New Mexico, and Quivira produced flax in great abundance and of the best quality; but we are ignorant if these nations cultivated or made use of it. The Court of  
Vol. I. E Spain,



**BOOK I.** vulgarly called *Coyote*. It is a plant common in warm countries, but more cultivated by the ancients, than the moderns.

The *Achiote*, called by the French *Rocou*, served the Mexicans in dying, as it now does the Europeans. Of the bark they made cordage, and the wood was used to produce fire by friction, after the mode of the ancient shepherds of Europe. This tree is well described in the dictionary of Bomare.

With regard to corn and leguminous plants, that country had from Europe, wheat, barley, rice, pease, beans, lentils, and others; all of which rooted themselves successfully in soils suited to their nature, and multiplied accordingly as we shall shew in our dissertations (i).

Of grain, the chief, the most useful, and most common was the maize, called by the Mexicans, *Tluolli*; of which there are several species, differing in size, colour, weight, and taste. There is the large and the small sort, the white, the yellow, the blue, the purple, the red, and the black. The Mexicans made bread of maize, and other meats, of which we shall treat hereafter. Maize was carried from America to Spain, and from Spain into the other countries of Europe, to the great advantage of the poor; though an author of the present day, would make America indebted to Europe for it; an opinion the most extravagant and improbable which ever entered a human brain (k).

Spain, being made acquainted of the lands of Mexico being fit for the culture of flax and hemp, sent, in the year 1778, twelve country families from Vega di Granata, to be employed in that kind of agriculture.

(i) Dr. Hernandez, in his Natural History of Mexico, describes the species of wheat found in Michuacan, and boasts its prodigious fecundity: but the ancients either did not know, or did not incline to use it, but gave preference then, as they still do, to their own maize. The first person who sowed European wheat in that country was, a Moorish slave belonging to Cortez, having discovered a few grains of it in a bag of rice, which he carried for provision, to the Spanish soldiers.

(k) Here follow the words of Bomare, in his Dictionary of Nat. Hist. *vide Blé de Turquie*.—*On donnoit à cette plante curieuse & utile, le nom de Blé d'Inde; parce qu'elle tiré son origine des Indes, d'où elle fut apporté en Turquie, & de là dans toutes les autres parties de l'Europe, de l'Afrique, & de l'Amerique*. The name of Grano di Turchia, by which it is at present known in Italy, must certainly have been the only reason of Bomarc's adopting an error, so contrary to the testimony of all writers on America, and the universal belief of nations. The wheat is called by the Spaniards of Europe and America, *Maize*, taken from the Haitina language, which was spoken in the island now called Hispaniola, or St. Domingo.

The chief pulse of the Mexicans, was the French bean, of which the species are more numerous and more varied than those of maize. The largest species is the *Ayacotli*, which is the size of a common bean, and comes from a beautiful red flower; but the most esteemed is the small black heavy French bean. This pulse, which in Italy is of no value, because it is not good there, is so excellent in Mexico, that it not only serves as sustenance to the poor class of people, but is also esteemed a luxury by the Spanish nobility.

Of plants which were valuable for their root, their leaves, their trunk, or their wood, the Mexicans had many which served them for food, namely, the *Xicama*, *Camote*, *Huacamote*, *Cacomite*, and others; or which furnished them with thread for their cloaths, or cordage, namely the *Iczotl*, and several species of *Maguei*; or gave them wood for buildings and other works, as the cedar, pine, cypress, fir, and ebony, &c.

SECT. VIII.  
Plants valuable for their root, for their leaves, for their trunk, or for their wood.

The *Xicama*, called by the Mexicans *Catzotl*, is a root the figure and size of an onion; quite white, solid, fresh, juicy, and relishing, and always eat raw.

The *Camote* is another root, extremely common in that country, of which there are three species, one white, one yellow, and another purple. When boiled they taste well, especially those of Queretaro, which are justly prized over all the kingdom (*l*).

The *Cacomite* is the esculent root of the plant which bears the beautiful tyger-flower, already described.

The *Huacamote* is the sweet root of a species of *Jucca* (*m*), which is also eat boiled. The *papa* which is a root transplanted into Europe, and greatly valued in Ireland, was also brought from South America, its native country, into Mexico, as many other roots and salads were from Spain and the Canaries, namely, turnips, radishes, carrots, garlic, lettuces, and asparagus, cabbages, &c. Onions were sold in the markets of Mexico, as Cortez mentions in his letters to Charles Vth. so that there was no necessity for importing

(*l*) Many call the *Camoti*, *Batate* or *Patate*; but I have avoided this name because it is equivocal, and indifferently used by authors to signify *Camoti* and *Pape* which are totally different roots.

(*m*) The *Jucca* is that plant of whose root they make *Cassava* bread, in several countries of America.



## BOOK I.

them from Europe. Besides the name Xonacatl which is given to the onion, and that of Xonocapetec, by which name a certain place has been known since the time of the Mexican kings; they let us understand that this plant was very ancient in that country, and never transplanted there from Europe.

The Maguei called by the Mexicans, *Metl*; by the Spaniards, *Pita*; and by many authors, the American aloe, from its being very similar to the real aloe, is one of the most common and most useful plants of Mexico. Hernandez describes nineteen species, still more different in their interior substance than in their external form and colour of leaves. In the seventh book of our history we shall have occasion to explain the great advantages the Mexicans derived from these plants, and the incredible profit the Spaniards now make of them.

The Iczotl is a species of mountain palm, pretty lofty, and generally with a double trunk. Its branches form the figure of a fan, and its leaves a spear. Its flowers are white and odorous, which the Spaniards preserve; and its fruit, at first sight, resembles the musa, but is altogether useless. Of its leaves they did formerly and still make fine mats; and the Mexicans got thread from it for their manufactures.

This is not the only palm of that country. Besides the *Royal Palm*, superior to all others in the beauty of its branches, the cocoa-palm, and the date-palms (*n*), there are other species worthy to be mentioned.

The Quauhcojolli, is a palm of middle size, whose trunk is inaccessible to quadrupeds, from being armed round with long, hard, and very sharp thorns. Its branches have the figure of an elegant feather, between which its fruit hangs in clusters, being round, large as the common walnut, and like it consisting of four parts, that is a skin at first green and afterwards blackish, a yellow pulp strongly adhering to the stone, a round and very hard stone, and within the stone a kernel or white substance.

The Ixhuatl is smaller and has not more than six or seven branches, for as soon as a new one buds, one of the old one's withers. Of

(*n*) Besides the Date palm proper to that country, there is also the Barbary date-palm. Dates are sold in the month of June, in the markets of Mexico, Angelopoli, and other cities; but notwithstanding their sweetness they are little in demand.

its leaves they made baskets and mats, and at present they make hats, and other conveniences of them. The bark to the depth of three fingers, is nothing but a mass of membranes, about a foot long, thin and flexible, but also strong; of a number of which joined together, the poor people make matresses. BOOK I.

The palm Teoiczotl is also small. The substance of the trunk which is soft, is surrounded with leaves of a particular substance, round, gross, white, smooth, and shining, which appears like so many shells heaped upon each other, with which, formerly the Indians, as they do now, adorned the arches of leaves which they made for their festivals.

There is another palm, which bears cocoas or nuts of oil, so called, (termed by the Spaniards *Cocos de Aceite*;) because they obtain a good oil from it. The cocoa of oil, is a nut in figure and in size like the nutmeg; within which there is a white, oily, eatable kernel, covered by a thin purple pellicle. The oil has a sweet scent, but is too easily condensed, and then becomes a white mass, soft, and white as snow.

For the excellence, variety, and plenty of its timber, that country is equal to any in the world; as there is no sort of climate wanting in it, every one produces its peculiar wood. Besides oaks, firs, pines, cypresses, beeches, ashes, hazels, poplars, and many others common in Europe, there are entire woods of cedars and ebonies, the two species most valued by the ancients: there is an abundance of Agalloco or wood of aloe, in Mixteca; of Tapinzecan, in Michuacan; Caoba, in Chiapan *Palo Gateado*; which we might call *creeping wood*, in Zoncolihcan, (now *Zongolica*); *Camote* in the mountains of Tezcoco; Granadillo or red ebony, in Mixteca and elsewhere; Mizquitl or real Acacia, Tepehuaxin, Copti, Jabin, Guayacan or holy wood, Ayaquahuitl, Oyametl, the wood of Zopilote, and innumerable other woods valuable for their durability, their hardness, and weight (*o*), their pliability or easiness of being cut, the elegance of

(*o*) Pliny, in his Natural History, lib. xvi. cap. 4. mentions no other woods of great specific weight, in water, than these four, ebony, box, larch, and barked cork; but in Mexico there are many trees, whose wood does not float in water, as the Guayacan, Tapinzeran, Jabin, Quilbrahacha, &c. The Quilbrahacha, which means break-axe, is so called because in cutting it the axe is frequently broke by the hardness of the wood.

their



## BOOK

their colours, or the agreeableness of their odour. The Camote is of a most beautiful purple; and the Granadillo, a dark-red colour; but the *Palo gateado*, Caoba, and Tzopiloquahuatl or wood of Zopilot, are still more admirable. The hardness of the Guayacan is well known in Europe; the Jabin has the same property in no less a degree. The aloe-wood of Mixteca, although different from the true Agalloco of the East, according to the description given of it by Garzia dell'Orto (*p*) and other authors, is however, not less to be esteemed for its delightful odour, especially when it is fresh cut. There is also in that country, a tree whose wood is precious, but its nature is so malignant as to occasion a swelling in the scrotum of any one who manages it indiscreetly when fresh cut. The name which the Michuacans give it (which I do not at present remember) expresses distinctly that noxious effect. I have never been a witness of this fact, nor have I seen the tree; but I learnt it when I was in Michuacan, from respectable authority.

Hernandez, in his Natural History, describes about one hundred species of trees; but having, as we before mentioned, consecrated his study to the medicinal plants, he omits the greater part of those which that fertile soil produces, and in particular those which are most considerable for their size, and valued for their wood. There are also trees, in height and largeness so prodigious, they are not at all inferior to those which Pliny boasts to be the miracles of nature.

Acosta makes mention of a cedar, which was in Atlacuechahuayan, a place nine miles distant from Antequera or Oaxaca, the circumference of whose trunk was sixteen fathoms, that is more than eighty-two feet of Paris; and I have seen in a house in the country a beam, one hundred and twenty Castilian feet, or one hundred and seven Parisian feet long. In the capital, and other cities there are very large tables of cedar to be seen, consisting of one single piece. In the valley of Atlixo there is still existing a very ancient fir-tree (*q*), so large, that into a cavity of its trunk which was occasioned by

(*p*) Storia dei Semplici, Aromati, &c. della India Orientale.

(*q*) The Mexican name of this tree is, Ahuehuatl; and the common Spaniard of that country calls it, Ahuehuete; but those who would speak in Castilian call it Sabino, that is Savin, in which they are deceived; for the Ahuehuatl, though very like to Savin, is not one, but a fir, as Hernandez demonstrates, in lib. iii. cap. 66, of his Nat. Hist. I saw the fir of Atlixco in my way through that city, in 1756, but not near enough to form a just idea of its bigness.

lightning,

lightning, fourteen men on horseback could conveniently enter. We are given a still stronger idea of its capacity from a testimony even so respectable as his Excellency D. F. Lorenzana, formerly Archbishop of Mexico, now of Toledo. This Prelate, in the annotations which he made on the letters of Cortez, to Charles Vth. and printed in Mexico, in 1770, attests that having gone himself, in company with the Archbishop of Guatemala and the Bishop of Angelopoli, to view that celebrated tree, he made one hundred young lads enter its trunk.

The Ceibas, which I saw in the maritime province of Xicayan, may be compared with this famous fir. The largeness of these trees is proportioned to their prodigious elevation, and they afford a most delightful prospect at the time they are adorned with new leaves and loaded with fruit, in which there is inclosed a particular species of white, fine, and most delicate cotton. This might be, and actually has been made into webs as soft and delicate, and perhaps more so, than silk (*r*); but it is toilsome to spin, on account of the smallness of the threads, and the profit does not requite the labour, the web not being lasting. Some use it for pillows and mattresses which have the singular property of swelling enormously when exposed to the sun.

Amongst the great many trees worthy of notice for their peculiarities, which I am however obliged to look over, I cannot omit a certain species of wood-fig, which grows in the country of the Cohuixcas and in other places of the kingdom. It is a lofty, gross, thick tree, similar in leaves and fruit to the common fig. From its branches, which extend horizontally, spring certain filaments which taking their direction towards the earth, increase and grow till they reach it; strike root and form so many new trunks, that from one single fig, a whole wood may be generated. The fruit of this tree is altogether useless, but its timber is good (*s*).

In

(*r*) De Bomare says, that the Africans make of the thread of the Ceiba, the vegetable taffety, which is so scarce, and so much esteemed in Europe. I do not wonder at the scarcity of such cloth, considering the difficulty of making it. The name Ceiba is taken, like many others, from the language which was spoke in the island Haiti, or San Domingo. The Mexicans call it, Pochotl; and many Spaniards Pochote. In Africa it has the name of Benten. The Ceiba, says the above author, is higher than all the trees hitherto known.

(*s*) A. Perez de Ribas makes mention of this singular fig, in his History of the Missions, from Cinaloa; and Bomare in his Dictionary, under the names of Figuier des Indes, Grande Figuier,



## BOOK I.

SECT. IX.  
Plants, of use  
for their re-  
fins, gums,  
oils, and  
juices.

With respect lastly to plants which yield profitable refins, gums, oils, or juices, the country of Anahuac is most singularly fertile, as Acofta in his Natural History acknowledges.

The Huitziloxitl, from which a balsam diftills, is a tree of moderate height. Its leaves are something fimilar to thofe of the almond tree, but larger; its wood is reddish and odorous, and its bark grey, but covered with a reddish pellicle. Its flowers, which are pale, fpring from the extremity of the branches. Its feed is small, white, and crooked; and likewise comes from the extremity of a thin fhell about a finger long. In whatever part an incifion is made, efpecially after rains, that excellent refin diftills which is fo much valued in Europe, and nowife inferior to the celebrated balsam of Meccha (*t*). Our balsam is of a reddish black, or a yellowish white, as from an incifion it runs of both colours, of a fharp and bitter tafte, and an intense but moft grateful odour. The balsam tree is common in the provinces of Panuco and Chiapan, and in other warm countries. The kings of Mexico caufed it to be tranfplanted into the celebrated garden of Huaxtepec, where it rooted fuccefsfully, and multiplied confiderably in all thofe mountains. Some of the Indians, to extract a greater quantity of balsam, after making an incifion in the tree, have burnt the branches. The abundance of thefe valuable trees make them regardless of the lofs of numbers; by which means they are not obliged to wait the flownefs of the diftillation. The ancient Mexicans not only collected the opobalsam, or drop diftilled from the trunk, but alfo extracted the xylobalsam from the branches by means of decoction (*u*). From the Huaconex and Maripenda (*x*), they extracted an oil equivalent to the balsam. The Huaconex is a tree of moderate height, and

Figuier, & Figuier admirable. The hiftorians of Eaft India defcribe another tree, fimilar to this, which is found there.

(*t*) The firft balsam brought from Mexico to Rome was fold at one hundred ducats, by the ounce, as Monardes attests in his History of the medicinal Simples of America, and was declared by the Apoftolic See, matter fit for chrifm, although it is different from that of Meccha, as Acofta and other writers on America obferve.

(*u*) There is an oil alfo drawn from the fruit of the Huitziloxitl, fimilar in finell and tafte to that of the bitter almond, but more acrimonious and intense, which is found highly ufeful in medicine.

(*x*) The names Huaconex and Maripenda are not Mexican, but adopted by the authors who write of thefe trees.

of

of an aromatic and hard wood which keeps fresh for years though buried under the earth. Its leaves are small and yellow, its flowers likewise small and white, and its fruit similar to that of the laurel. They distilled oil from the bark of the tree; after breaking it, keeping it three days in spring water, and then drying it in the sun. They likewise extracted an oil from the leaves, of a pleasing odour. The Maripenda is a shrub, whose leaves are like the iron of a lance; and the fruit is similar to the grape, and grows in clusters which are first green, afterwards red. They extracted the oil, by a decoction of the branches, with a mixture of some of the fruit.

The Xochiocotzotl, commonly liquid amber, is the liquid Storax of the Mexicans. It is a great tree (not a shrub, as Pluche makes it); its leaves are similar to those of the maple tree indented, white in one part, and dark in the other; and disposed in threes. The fruit is thorny and round but polygonous, with the surface and the angles yellow. The bark of the tree is in part green, part tawny. By incision in the trunk, they extract that precious resin called by the Spaniards, *liquidambar*; and the oil of the same name, which is still more odorous and estimable. They also obtain liquid amber from a decoction of the branches, but it is inferior to that which distils from the trunk.

The Mexican name Copalli, is generic, and common to all the resins; but especially signifies those which were made use of for incense. There are ten species of trees which yield these sorts of resin, and differ not only in their name, but in foliage and fruit, and in the quality of the resin. That simply called Copal, as being the principal, is a white transparent resin, which distils from a large tree, whose leaves resemble those of the oak, but are larger, and the fruit is round and reddish. This resin is well known in Europe by the name of gum *Copal*, and also the use which is made of it in medicine and varnishes. The ancient Mexicans used it chiefly in burnt offerings which they made for the worship of their idols; or to pay respect to ambassadors, and other persons of the first rank. At present they consume a great quantity in the worship of the true God, and his saints. The *Tecopalli* or *Tepecopalli*, is a resin similar in colour, odour, and taste to the incense of



## BOOK I.

Arabia; which distils from a tree of moderate size that grows in mountains, the fruit of which is like an acorn, containing the nut enveloped in a mucilage, within which there is a small kernel, that is useful in medicine. Not only these two trees but all the others of this class, which we cannot here describe, are peculiar to warm climates.

The *Caragna*, and the *Tecamaca*, resins well known in the apothecaries shops of Europe, distil from two Mexican trees of rather large size. The trunk of the *Caragna* (y), is tawny, smooth, shining, and odorous; and its leaves, though round, not dissimilar to those of the olive. The tree of the *Tecamaca* has large indented leaves, and red, round, and small fruit, hanging from the end of the branches.

The *Mizquitl* or Mezquite, as the Spaniards call it, is a species of true *Acacia*; and the gum which distils from it is the true gum arabic, as Hernandez and other learned naturalists testify. The Mezquite is a thorny shrub, whose branches are most irregularly disposed; and its leaves small, thin, and pinnated. Its flowers are like those of the birch tree. Its fruits are sweet, eatable shells, containing a seed, of which anciently the barbarous *Cicimecas* made a paste, which served them for bread. Its wood is exceedingly hard and heavy. These trees are as common in Mexico as oaks in Europe, particularly on hills in temperate countries (z).

Lac, or Gomma Laca (as it is called by the Spaniards), runs in such abundance from a tree like the Mezquite, the branches are covered with it (a). This tree, which is of moderate size, has a red-

(y) The Mexicans gave the *Caragna* tree, the name of *Trabuelilocaquabuilt*, that is, tree of malignity, not *Haheliloca*, as De Bomare writes it; because they superstitiously believed it to be feared by evil spirits, and a powerful preservative against sorcery. The name *Tecamaca* is taken from the *Tecomac* Ihiyac of the Mexicans.

(z) There is in Michuacan a species of Mezquite or *Acacia*, without the least thorn, and with finer leaves; but in every thing else like the other.

(a) *Garzia dell'Orto*, in his history of the simples of India, maintains, from the accounts of some persons experienced in these countries, that Lac is produced by ants. This opinion has been adopted by many authors; and Bomare does him the honour to believe the fact fully demonstrated; but let us examine how far this is from truth. First, These boasted demonstrations are but equivocal proofs and fallacious conjectures, which any one will be convinced of, who reads the above authors. Second, Of all the naturalists who write of Lac, no one has ever seen it on the tree, but Hernandez; and this learned and sincere author affirms, without the smallest diffidence; that the Lac is a gum distilled from the tree

red-coloured trunk, and is very common in the provinces of the Coahuixcas and Tlahuica.

Dragon's blood runs from a large tree whose leaves are broad and angular. It grows in the mountains of Quauhchinanco, and in those of the Coahuixca's (*b*).

The *Elastic Gum*, called by the Mexicans *Olin* or *Olli*, and by the Spaniards of that kingdom, *Ule*, distils from the Olquahuatl, which is a tree of moderate size; the trunk of which is smooth and yellowish, the leaves pretty large, the flowers white, and the fruit yellow and rather round, but angular; within which there are kernels as large as filberds, and white, but covered with a yellowish pellicle. The kernel has a bitter taste, and the fruit always grows attached to the bark of the tree. When the trunk is cut, the Ule which distils from it is white, liquid, and viscous; then it becomes yellow, and lastly of a leaden colour though rather blacker, which it always retains. Those who gather it can model it to any form according to the use they put it to.

The Mexicans made their foot-balls of this gum, which, though heavy, rebound more than those filled with air. At present, besides other uses to which they apply it, they varnish their hats, their boots, cloaks, and great coats with it, in the same way as wax is used in Europe, which makes them all water proof: from Ule, when rendered liquid by fire, they extract a medicinal oil. This tree grows in hot countries such as Ihualapan and Mecatlan, and is common in the kingdom of Guatemala (*c*). The Quauhxiotl, is a

tree which the Mexicans call, Tzinacancuitla-quahuatl, and confutes the other opinion. Thirdly, The country where Lac abounds, is the fertile province of the Tlahuixchas, where all the fruits prosper surprisingly; and are thence carried in great quantities to the capital. But such a quantity of fruit could not be gathered if there were so many millions of ants in that land as would be necessary to produce such an excessive quantity of Lac, the trees being very numerous, and almost all of them full of it. Fourthly, If the Lac is the labour of ants, why do they produce it only in these trees, and not in any other species? &c. Lac was called by the Mexicans, Bat's Dung, from some analogy which they discovered between them.

(*b*) The Mexicans call dragon's blood *Expàtli*, which signifies blood-coloured medication; and the tree *Exquahuatl*, that is blood-coloured tree. There is another tree of the same name in the mountains of Quauhnhuac, which is something similar, but its leaves are round and rough, its bark thick, and its root odorous.

(*c*) In Michuacan there is a tree, called by the Tarascas *Tarantaqua*, of the same species as the Olquahuatl; but its leaves are different.



## BOOK I.

midling tree, the leaves of which are round, and the bark reddish. There are two inferior species of it, the one yields a white gum, which, when put in water, gives it a milk colour. The other drops a reddish gum; they are both very serviceable in dysenteries.

In this class of plants we ought to give a place to the fir, the *Higuerilla* (which resembles the fig), and the *Ocote*, a certain species of pine that is very aromatic, on account of the oils which they yield; and Brazil wood, logwood, indigo, and many others, on account of their juices; but several of these plants are already known in Europe, and the others we shall have occasion to treat of elsewhere.

The small part of the vegetable kingdom of Anahuac which we have here communicated, revives our regret that the accurate knowledge, which the ancient Mexicans acquired of natural history, has almost totally disappeared. We know its woods, mountains, and vallies are scattered with innumerable plants, valuable and useful, yet hardly one naturalist has ever fixed his attention on them. Who can help lamenting, that of the immense treasures which the period of two centuries and a half has discovered in its rich mines, no part should have been destined to the foundation of an academy of Naturalists, who might have pursued the steps of the celebrated Hernandez, and imparted to society the knowledge of these precious gifts which the Creator has there so liberally dispensed?

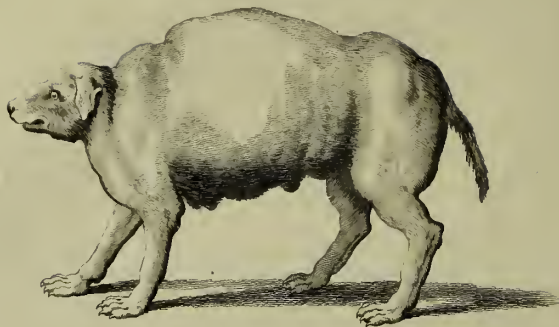
SECT. X.  
Quadrupeds  
of the king-  
dom of Ana-  
huac.

The animal kingdom of Anahuac is not better known, although it was attended to with equal diligence by Doctor Hernandez. The difficulty of distinguishing the species, and the impropriety of appellations taken from analogy, have rendered the history of animals perplexed and indistinct. The first Spaniards who gave them names, were more skilful in the art of war than in the study of nature. Instead of retaining the terms which the Mexicans used, which would have been the most proper, they denominated many animals, tygers, wolves, bears, dogs, squirrels, &c. although they were very different in kind, merely from some resemblance in the colour of their skin, or figure, or some similarity in their habits and disposition. I do not pretend to correct their errors, and still less to illustrate the natural history of that vast kingdom; but only to give my readers some slight idea of the quadrupeds, birds, reptiles, fishes, and insects, which inhabit the land and waters of Anahuac.

Of



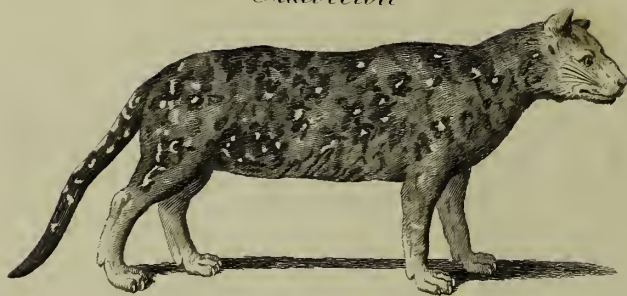




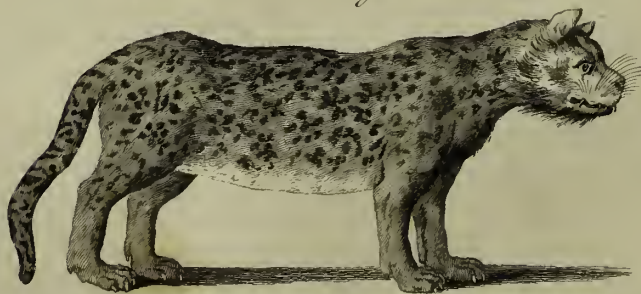
*Mexican Porcupine*



*Tlacocelotl*



*Mexican Tiger*



Of the quadrupeds some are ancient, some modern. We call those modern which were transported from the Canaries and Europe into that country in the sixteenth century. Such are horses, asses, bulls, sheep, goats, hogs, dogs, and cats, which have all successfully multiplied. In our fourth dissertation we shall evince this truth in confutation of some philosophers of the age, who have endeavoured to persuade us that all quadrupeds degenerate in the new world.

Of the ancient quadrupeds, by which we mean those that have from time immemorial been in that country, some were common to both the continents of Europe and America, some peculiar to the new world, in common however to Mexico and other countries of North or South America, others were natives only of the kingdom of Mexico.

The ancient quadrupeds common to Mexico and the old continent are, lions, tygers, wild cats, bears, wolves, foxes, the common stags, and white stags (*d*), bucks, wild goats, badgers, polecats, weazles, martens, squirrels, *Polatucas*, rabbits, hares, otters, and rats. I am well aware that Mr. Buffon will not allow a native lion, tyger, or rabbit, to America: but as in our dissertations we have combated this opinion, which rests chiefly on the slight foundation of the imagined impossibility of animals, which are peculiar to warm countries of the old world, finding a passage to the new continent; it is not necessary here to interrupt the course of our history with confuting it.

The *Mixtli* of the Mexicans, is certainly no other than the lion without hair mentioned by Pliny (*e*), and totally distinct from the African lion; and the *Ocelotl* is no way different from the African tyger, according to the testimony of Hernandez, who knew both the latter and the former. The *Tochtli* of Mexico is exactly the rabbit of the old continent, and at least as ancient as the Mexican calendar, in which the figure of the rabbit was the first symbolical cha-

(*d*) The white stag, whether it is of the same or a different species from the other stag, is unquestionably common to both continents. It was known to the Greeks and Romans. The Mexicans called it king of the Stags. Mr. Buffon is desirous of persuading us that the white colour of stags is the effect of their being in captivity; but as in the mountains of New Spain, the white stag is found, which was never made captive by man, such an idea can no longer be entertained.

(*e*) Pliny, in lib. viii. cap. 16. distinguishes the two species of lions, with and without hair, and ascertains the number of each species which Pompey presented at the Roman spectacles.



## BOOK I.

rafter of their years. The wild cats, in size much larger than the domestic cats, are fierce and dangerous. The bears are all black, and more corpulent than those which are brought from the Alps into Italy. The hares are distinguished from those of Europe by their longer ears, and the wolves by a groffer head. Both species are plentiful in that country. According to M. Buffon, we give the name *Polatuca* to the *Quimickpatlan*, or flying rat of the Mexicans. We call it rat, because it resembles it in the head, though it is much larger; and *flying*, because in its natural state the skin of its sides is loose and wrinkled, which it distends and expands together with its feet like wings when it makes any considerable leap from tree to tree. The vulgar Spaniard confounds this quadruped with the common squirrel from their likenesses, but they are undoubtedly different. Mice were brought to Mexico in European ships; the rat was not so, but always known in Mexico by the name of *Quimichin*, which term they used metaphorically to their spies.

The quadrupeds which are common to Mexico and other regions of the new world, are the *Cojametl*, *Epatl*, several species of apes, comprehended by the Spaniards under the generic name of *Monos*, the *Ajotochtli*, *Aztacojotl*, *Tlacuatzin*, *Techichi*, *Telalmototli*, *Techallotl*, *Amiztli*, *Mapach*, and the *Danta* (f).

The *Cojametl*, to which, from its resemblance to the wild boar, the Spaniards gave the name of *Javali*, or wild hog, is called in other countries of America *Pecar*, *Saino*, and *Tayassu*. The gland it has in the cavity of its back from which a plentiful wheyish stinking liquid distils, led the first historians of the country, and since them many others into the mistaken belief that it produced hogs with their navels on their backs; and many still credit the absurdity, although upwards of two centuries are elapsed since anatomists have evinced the

(f) Many authors include the *Paco*, or Peruvian ram, the *Huanaco*, the *Vicogna*, *taruga*, and the sloth, amongst the animals of Mexico; but all these quadrupeds are peculiar to South and none of them to North America. It is true, Hernandez makes mention of the *Paco* amongst the quadrupeds of New Spain, gives a drawing of it, and makes use of the Mexican name *Pelonichcatl*; but it was on account of a few individuals which were brought there from Peru, which the Mexicans called by that name; in the same manner as he describes several animals of the Philippine Isles, not that therefore they had ever been bred in Mexico, or found in any country of North America, unless it was some individual carried there as a curiosity as they are carried into Europe.

error by dissection of the animal. Such is the difficulty of rooting out popular prejudices ! The flesh of the *Cojametl* is agreeable to eat, provided it is quickly killed, the gland cut out, and all the stinking liquid cleaned from it ; otherwise the whole meat becomes infected.

The *Epatl*, by the Spaniards called *Zorrillo*, small fox, is less known in Europe by the beauty of its skin than the intolerable stink it leaves behind when hunters are in close pursuit of it (*g*).

The *Tlacuatzin*, which in other countries bears the names of *Chincha*, *Sarigua*, and *Opossum*, has been described by many writers, and is much celebrated on account of the double skin to the belly in the female, which reaches from the beginning of the stomach to the orifice of the womb, covering its teats, has an opening in the middle to admit its young, where they are guarded and suckled. In creeping, or climbing over the walls of houses, it keeps the skin distended, with the entrance shut, so that its young cannot drop out ; but when it wishes to send them abroad to begin to provide food for themselves, or to let them re-enter either to be suckled or secured from danger, it opens the entrance by relaxing the skin, disguising her burden while she carries them, and her delivery every time she lets them out. This curious quadruped is the destroyer of all poultry.

The *Ajotochtli*, called by the Spaniards *Armadillo*, or *Encobertado*, and by others *Tatu*, is well known to Europeans by the bony scales which cover its back, resembling the ancient armour of horses. The Mexicans gave it the name of *Ajotochtli*, from an imperfect likeness it has to the rabbit, when it puts out its head and throws it back upon its neck, while it shrinks under its scales or shell (*h*).

(*g*) Mr. Buffon enumerates four species of the *Epatl* under the generic name of *Mouffetes*. He observes afterwards, that the two first which he names *Coaso* and *Conipata*, are from North America, and the *Chincho* and *Zorrillo*, which are the two others, are from South America. We find no grounds to believe these four different species, but only four varieties of the same species. The name *Coaso*, or squabs taken from Dampier the navigator, who affirms the term to be common in New Spain, was never heard of in all that country. The Indians of Yucatan, where that navigator was, call that quadruped *Pai*.

(*h*) *Ajotochtli* is a word compounded of *Ajotli*, the back part of the head, and *Tochtli*, rabbit. Buffon numbers eight species of them under the name of *Tatons*, estimating their difference from the number of scales and moveable substances which cover them. I cannot exactly say how many species there may be in Mexico, having but a few individuals ; as I did not think at the time of writing on this subject, I was not curious to count their scales, nor do I know of any body who ever attended to such a strange kind of distinction.

But



## BOOK I

But it resembles no animal more than the turtle, although many parts of its form are totally dissimilar. We might give it the name of the testaceous quadruped. When this animal happens to be chased on level ground, it has no means of escaping from the hands of its pursuers; but as it chiefly inhabits the mountains, when it meets with any declivity it coils itself up in the form of a globe, and by rolling itself down the descent fools the hunter.

The *Techichi*, which had elsewhere the name of *Alco*, was a quadruped of Mexico, and other countries of America, which from its resemblance to a little dog was called by the Spaniards *Perro*, which signifies *dog*. It was of a melancholy aspect and perfectly dumb, from whence the fabulous account propagated by many authors still living arose, of dogs becoming mute when transported from the old to the new world. The flesh of the *Techichi* was eat by the Mexicans, and if we may credit the Spaniards who eat it, was agreeable and nourishing food. After the conquest of Mexico, the Spaniards having neither large cattle, nor sheep, provided their markets with this quadruped; by which means the species was soon extinct, although it had been very numerous.

The *Tlalmototli*, or land-squirrel, called by Buffon *Svizzero*, is like the real squirrel in the eyes, in the tail, in swiftness, and in all its movements; but very different in colour, in size, in its habitation, and some of its qualities. The hair of its belly is quite white, and the rest of it is white mixed with grey. Its size is double that of the squirrel, and it does not dwell in trees, but in small holes which it digs in the earth, or amongst the stones of ramparts which enclose fields, where it does considerable damage by the grain which it carries off. It bites most furiously any one who approaches it, and cannot be tamed, but has great elegance of form, and is graceful in its movement. This species is a very numerous one, particularly in the kingdom of Michuacan. The *Techallotl* is no way different from the preceding animal, except in having a smaller and less hairy tail.

The *Amyxtli*, or sea-lion, is an amphibious quadruped which inhabits the shores of the Pacific Ocean, and some rivers of that kingdom. Its body is three feet in length, its tail two. Its snout is long

long, its legs short, the nails crooked. Its skin is valuable on account of the length and softness of its hair (*i*).

The Mapach of the Mexicans is, agreeable to the opinion of Buffon, the same quadruped which is known in Jamaica by the name of *Ratton*, rattoon, or West-Indian fox. The Mexican one is of the size of a badger, with a black head, a long sharp snout like a greyhound, small ears, round body, hair mixed with black and white, a long and hairy tail, and five toes to every foot. It has a white streak over each eye, and like the squirrel makes use of its paws to convey any thing to its mouth which it is going to eat. It feeds indifferently on grain, fruits, insects, lizards, and pullet's blood. It is easily tamed, and entertaining with its play, but perfidious like the squirrel, and apt to bite its master.

The *Danta*, or *Anta*, or *Beori*, or *Tapir*, as it is differently named in different countries, is the largest quadruped of the kingdom of Mexico (*k*), and approaches most to the sea-horse, not however in size, but in some of its shapes and qualities. The danta is about the size of a middling mule. Its body is a little arched like that of a hog, its head gross and long with an appendage to the skin of the upper lip, which it extends or contracts at pleasure; its eyes are small, its ears little and round, its legs short, its fore feet have four nails, the hind feet three, its tail short and pyramidal, its skin pretty thick and covered with thick hair, which at an advanced age is brown; its set of teeth, which are composed of twenty maxillary, and as many incisors, is so strong and sharp, and it makes such terrible bites with them that it has been seen, according to the testimony of Oviedo the historian, and an eye-witness, to tear off at one bite two or three handbreadths of skin from a hound, and at another a whole leg and thigh. Its flesh is eatable (*l*); and its skin valuable, from its being so stout as to resist not only arrows, but even musket-balls.

(*i*) We reckon the *Amiztli* among the quadrupeds which are common to other countries of America, as it appears to be the same animal which Buffon describes under the name of *Saricovienne*.

(*k*) The *Danta* is much less than the *Tlacaxolotl* described by Hernandez; but we do not know of this great quadruped ever having been in the kingdom of Mexico. The same may be said of the stags of New Mexico, and of the *Cibolle*, or *Bifonte*, which are also larger than the *Danta*. See our IVth Dissertation.

(*l*) Oviedo says, that the legs of the *Danta* are pretty good and relishing food, provided they remain twenty-four hours continually at the fire.



## BOOK I.

This quadruped inhabits the solitary woods of warm countries near to some river or lake, as it lives not less in the water than on the land.

All the species of monkies in that kingdom, are known by the Mexicans under the general name of *Ozomatli*, and by the Spaniards under that of *Monos*. They are of different sizes and figure, some small and uncommonly diverting; some middling, of the size of a badger; and others large, stout, fierce, and bearded, which are called by some *Zambos*. These when they stand upright, which they do upon two legs, often equal the stature of a man. Amongst the middling kind there are those which from having a dogs-head, belong to the class of the cynocephali, although they are all furnished with a tail (*m*).

With respect to the ant-killers, that is, those quadrupeds which are so singular for the enormous length of their snout, the narrowness of their throat, and immoderate tongue, with which they draw the ants out of their ant-hills, and from whence they have got their name; I have never seen any in that kingdom, nor do I know that there are any there; but I believe it is no other than the *aztacojotl*, that is, *cojote*, ant-killer, mentioned, but not described by Hernandez (*n*).

The quadrupeds which peculiarly belong to the land of Anahuac, whose species I do not know to have been found in South America, or in other countries of North America, exempt from the dominion of Spain, are the *Cojotl*, the *Tlalcojotl*, *Xoloitzcuintli*, *Tepeitzcuintli*, *Itzcuintepotzotli*, *Ocotochtli*, *Cojopollin*, *Tuza*, *Abuitzotl*, *Huitztlatzatzin*, and perhaps others which we have not known.

The *Cojotl*, or Coyoto, as the Spaniards call it, is a wild beast voracious like the wolf, cunning like the fox, in form like a dog, and in some qualities like the *Adive* and the *Chacal*: from whence several

(*m*) The Cynocephalos of the ancient continent has no tail as every one knows. Their having been monkies found in the New World, which have the head of a dog, and are furnished with tails, Buffon, in his class of apes, justly applies to them of this class the name of Cynocephali Cercopitechi, and divides them into two species. Buffon, amongst the many species of monkies which he describes, omits this one.

(*n*) We call those quadrupeds, ant-killers, which the Spaniards term *Hormigueros*, and the French *Fourmillier*; but the bear, ant-killers, described by Oviedo, are certainly different from the Fourmilliers of Buffon; for although they agree in the eating of ant, and in their enormous tongue and snout, they are nevertheless remarkably distinguished from each other as to tail, for those of Buffon have an immense tail, but Oviedo's none at all. The description which Oviedo gives of their way of hunting the ants is most singular and curious.

historians

historians have at one time judged it of one species, at another time of another species ; but it is unquestionably different from all those, as we shall demonstrate in our Dissertations. It is less than the wolf, and about the size of a mastiff, but slenderer. It has yellow sparkling eyes, small ears pointed and erect, a blackish snout, strong limbs, and its feet armed with large crooked nails. Its tail thick and hairy, and its skin a mixture of black, brown, and white. Its voice hath both the howl of the wolf and the bark of the dog. The Coyoto is one of the most common quadrupeds of Mexico (*o*), and the most destructive to the flocks. It invades a sheepfold, and when it cannot find a lamb to carry off, it seizes a sheep by the neck with its teeth, and coupling with it, and beating it on the rump with its tail, conducts it where it pleases. It pursues the deer, and sometimes attacks even men. In flight it does nothing in general but trot ; but its trot is so lively and swift, that a horse at the gallop can hardly overtake it. The *Cuetlachcojotl* appears to us to be a quadruped of the same species with the Coyoto, as it differs in nothing from it but being thicker in the neck, and having hair like the wolf.

The *Tlalcojotl*, or *Tlalcoyoto*, is of the size of a middling dog, but grosser in make, and, in our opinion, the largest quadruped of those which live under the earth. In the head it is something like the cat, and in colour and length of hair like the lion. It has a long thick tail, and feeds on poultry, and other little animals, which it hunts after in the obscurity of the night.

The *Itzcuintepotzotli*, and *Tepuitzcuintli*, and *Xoloitzcuintli*, are three species of quadrupeds similar to dogs. The *Itzcuintapolzotli*, or hunch-backed dog, is as large as a Maltesan dog, the skin of which is varied with white, tawny, and black. Its head is small in proportion to its body, and appears to be joined directly to it on account of the shortness and greatness of its neck ; its eyes are pleasing, its ears loose, its nose has a considerable prominence in the middle, and its tail so small, that it hardly reaches half way down its leg ; but the characteristic of it is a great hunch which it bears from its neck to its

(*o*) Neither Buffon nor Bomare make mention of the Coyoto, although the species is one of the most common and most numerous of Mexico, and amply described by Hernandez, whose Natural History they frequently quote.



## BOOK I.

rump. The place where this quadruped most abounds is the kingdom of Michuacan, where it is called *Abora*. The *Tepeitzcuintli*, that is, the mountain-dog, is a wild beast so small, that it appears a little dog, but it is so daring that it attacks deer, and sometimes kills them. Its hair and tail are long, its body black, but its head, neck, and breast are white (*p*). The *Xoloitzcuintli* is larger than the two preceding; there being some of them, whose bodies are even four feet long. Its face is like a dog, but its tusks like the wolf, its ears erect, its neck gross, and tail long. The greatest singularity about this animal is its being totally destitute of hair, except upon its snout, where it has some thick crooked bristles. Its whole body is covered with a smooth, soft, ash-coloured skin, but spotted in part with black and tawny. These three species are almost totally extinct, or at least very few of them remain (*q*).

The *Ocotochtli* appears agreeable to the description given of it by Hernandez, to belong to the class of wild cats; but the author adds some circumstances to it which have much the air of a fable; not that he has been desirous of deceiving, but that he has trusted too much to the informations of others (*r*).

The *Cojopollin* is a quadruped of the size of a common mouse; but the tail is grosser which it uses as a hand. Its snout and ears are similar to those of a pig: its ears are transparent, its legs and feet are white, and its belly is of a whitish yellow. It lives and brings up its young in trees. When its young fear any thing, they cling closely to their mother.

(*p*) Buffon believes the *Tepeitzcuintli* to be the glutton; but we contradict this opinion in our Dissertations.

(*q*) Giovanni Fabri, a Lincean academician, published at Rome a long and learned dissertation, in which he endeavoured to prove, that the *xoloitzcuintli* is the same with the wolf of Mexico; having without doubt been deceived by the original drawing of the *xoloitzcuintli* which was sent to Rome with other pictures of Hernandez; but if he had read the description, which this eminent naturalist gives of that animal in the book of the Quadrupeds of New Spain, he would have spared himself the labour of writing that Dissertation and the expences of publishing it.

(*r*) Dr. Hernandez says, that when the *Ocotochtli* makes any prey it covers it with leaves, and mounting after on some neighbouring tree, it begins howling to invite other animals to eat its prey; and itself is always the last to eat; because the poison of its tongue is so strong, that if it eat first the prey would be infected, and other animals who eat of it would die. This fable is still in the mouths of the vulgar.

The


The *Tozan*, or *Tuza*, is a quadruped of the bigness of an European mole, but very different otherwise. Its body which is well made is seven or eight inches long. Its snout is like that of a mouse, its ears small and round, and tail short. Its mouth is armed with very strong teeth, and its paws are furnished with strong crooked nails, with which it digs into the earth and makes little holes, where it inhabits. The *Tuza* is most destructive to the fields by stealing the corn, and to the highways by the number of holes and hollows which it makes in them; for when it cannot, on account of its little sight, find its first hole, it makes another, multiplying by such means the inconveniences and dangers to those who travel on horseback. It digs the earth with its claws, and with two dogs-teeth which it has in the upper jaw, larger than its others; in digging it puts the earth into two membranes like purses which are under its ear, which are furnished with muscles necessary for contraction or distension. When the membranes are full, it empties them by striking the bottom of the membranes with its paws, and then goes on to dig again in the same manner, using its dogs-teeth and claws as a mattock, and its two membranes as a little sack or basket. The species of the *Tuza* is very numerous; but we do not recollect to have ever seen them in the places where the land-squirrels inhabit.

The *Abuitzotl* is an amphibious quadruped, which for the most part dwells in the rivers of warm countries. Its body is a foot long, its snout long and sharp, and its tail large. Its skin is of a mixed black and brown colour.

The *Huitztlacuatzin* is the hedge-hog or porcupine of Mexico. It is as large as a midling dog, which it resembles in the face, although its muzzle is flat; its feet and legs are rather gross, and its tail in proportion with its body. The whole of its body, except the belly, the hinder part of the tail, and inside of the legs, is armed with quills or spines, which are empty, sharp, and a span long. On its snout and forehead it has long strait bristles, which rise upon its head like a plume. All its skin, even between the spines is covered with a soft black hair. It feeds only on the fruits of the earth (s).

(s) Buffon would make the *Huitztlacuatzin* the *Coendù* of Guiana, but the *Coendù* is carnivorous, whereas the *Huitztlacuatzin* feeds on fruits.



BOOK I.  The *Cacomiztle* is a quadruped, exceedingly like the martin in its way of life. It is of the size and form of a common cat; but its body is larger, its hair longer, its legs shorter, and its aspect more wild and fierce. Its voice is a sharp cry, and its food is poultry and other little animals. It inhabits, and brings up its young in places less frequented than houses. By day it sees little, and does not come out of its hiding-place but at night, to search for food. The *Tlacuatzin*, as well as the *Cacomiztle*, are to be seen in some of the houses of the capital (*t*).

Besides these quadrupeds, there were others in the Mexican empire, which I know not whether to consider as peculiar to that country, or as common to other parts of America; such as the *Itzcuinquani* or dog-eater; the *Tlalocclotl* or little lion; and the *Tlalmiztli* or little tiger. Of those, which although not belonging to the kingdom of Mexico are to be found in other parts of North America subject to the Spaniards, we shall take notice in our Dissertations.

SECT. XI.  
Birds of  
Mexico.

We should find the birds a more difficult task than the quadrupeds, if we should attempt to give an enumeration of their different species, with a description of their forms and manners. Their prodigious numbers, their variety, and many valuable qualities, have occasioned some authors to observe that, as Africa is the country of beasts, so Mexico is the country of birds. Hernandez, in his Natural History, describes above two hundred species peculiar to that kingdom, and yet passes over many that deserve notice, such as the *Cuitlacochi*, the *Zacua*, and the *Madrugador*. We shall content ourselves with running over some classes of them, and point out any peculiarities, here and there, as they occur. Among the birds of prey there are kestrels, goshawks, and several species of eagles, falcons, and sparrow-hawks. The naturalist already mentioned, allows the birds of this class a superiority over those of Europe; and the excellence of the Mexican falcons was so remarkable, that

(*t*) I do not know the true Mexican name of the *Cacomiztle*, and have therefore used the name which the Spaniards in that kingdom, gave it. Hernandez does not mention this quadruped. It is true he describes one, under the name of *Cacamiztli*, but this is evidently an error of the press.

by the desire of Philip the Second, a hundred were every year sent to Spain. The largest, the most beautiful, and the most valuable among the eagles is that named by the Mexicans, *Itzquaubtli*, which not only pursues the larger birds and hares, but will even attack men and beasts. There are two kinds of kestrel; the one called *Cenotzqui* is particularly beautiful.

The Ravens of Mexico, called by the Mexicans *Cacabtl*, do not, as in other countries, clear the fields of carrion, but are only employed in stealing the ears of corn. The business of clearing the fields there, is reserved principally for the *Zopilots*, known in South America by the name of *Gallinazzi*; in other places, by that of *Aure*; and in some places, though very improperly, by that of ravens (*u*). There are two very different species of these birds; the one, the Zopilote properly so called, the other called the *Coscaquaubtli*: they are both bigger than the raven. These two species resemble each other in their hooked bill and crooked claws, and by having upon their head instead of feathers, a wrinkled membrane with some curling hairs. They fly so high, that although they are pretty large, they are lost to the sight; and especially before a hail storm they will be seen wheeling, in vast numbers, under the loftiest clouds, till they entirely disappear. They feed upon carrion, which they discover by the acuteness of their sight and smell, from the greatest height, and descend upon it with a majestic flight, in a great spiral course. They are both almost mute. The two species are distinguishable, however, by their size, their colour, their numbers, and some other peculiarities. The Zopilots, properly so called, have black feathers, with a brown head, bill, and feet; they go often in flocks, and roost together upon trees (*x*). This species is very numerous, and is to be found in all the different climates; while on

(*u*) Hernandez has, without any hesitation, made the Zopilote a species of raven; but they are, certainly, very different birds, not only in their size, but in the shape of the head; in their flight, and in their voice. Bomare says, that the *Aura* is the *Cosquaubtli* of New Spain, and the *Tropilot* of the Indians; so that the *Coscaquaubtli*, as well as the *Tzopilotl*, are Mexican names used by the Indians, to denote not one bird only, but two different kinds. Some give the one species the name of *Aura*, and the other that of *Zopilote*, or *Gallinazzo*.

(*x*) The Zopilots contradict the general rule, laid down by Pliny, lib. ix. cap. 19. *Uncos unguis habentia omnino non congregantur, & sibi quæque prædantur*. The rule can only apply strictly to real birds of prey, such as eagles, vultures, falcons, sparrow-hawks, &c.



BOOK I. the contrary, the *Cozcaquauhтли* is far from numerous, and is peculiar to the warmer climates alone. The latter bird is larger than the Zopilot, has a red head and feet with a beak of a deep red colour, except towards its extremity which is white. Its feathers are brown except upon the neck and parts about the breast, which are of a reddish black. The wings are of an ash colour upon the inside, and upon the outside are variegated with black and tawny.

The *Cozcaquauhтли* is called by the Mexicans, *king of the Zopilots* (*y*); and they say, that when these two species happen to meet together about the same carrion, the Zopilot never begins to eat till the *Cozcaquauhтли* has tasted it. The Zopilot is a most useful bird to that country, for they not only clear the fields, but attend the crocodiles and destroy the eggs which the females of those dreadful amphibious animals leave in the sand to be hatched by the heat of the sun. The destruction of such a bird ought to be prohibited under severe penalties.

Among the night birds, are several kinds of owls, to which we may add the bats, although they do not properly belong to the class of birds. There are great numbers of bats in the warm and woody countries; some of them will draw blood, with dreadful bites, from horses and other animals. In some of the very hot countries bats are found of a prodigious size, but not so large as those of the Philippine Isles, and other parts of the East.

Under the title of aquatic birds I shall comprehend, not only the *Palmipedes* which swim and live generally in the water, but the *Himantopodes*, also; with other fishing birds which live chiefly upon the sea shore, upon the sides of lakes and rivers, and seek their food

(*y*) The bird which now goes by the name of *King of the Zopilots*, in New Spain, seems different from the one we are now describing. This modern king of the Zopilots is a strong bird, of the size of a common eagle; with a stately air; strong claws; fine, piercing eyes; and a beautiful black, white, and tawny plumage. It is remarkable, particularly, for a certain scarlet coloured, fleshy substance, which surrounds its neck like a collar, and comes over its head in the form of a little crown. I have had this description of it from a person of knowledge and veracity, who assures me that he has seen three different individuals of this species, and particularly that one which was sent from Mexico, in 1750, to the catholic king, Ferdinand VI. He farther informs me, that there was a genuine drawing of this bird, published in a work called, the American Gazetteer. The Mexican name *Cozcaquauhтли*, which means Ring Eagle, is certainly more applicable to this bird than to the other. The figure exhibited in our plate, is copied from that of the American Gazetteer.

in the water. Of birds of this kind there is a prodigious number of geese, at least twenty species of ducks, several kinds of herons and egrets, with vast numbers of swans, gulls, water-rails, divers, king's fishers, pelicans, and others. The multitude of ducks is sometimes so great as quite to cover the fields, and to appear, at a distance, like flocks of sheep. Among the herons and egrets, some are ash-coloured, some perfectly white; and others of which the plumage of the body is white, while the neck, with the tips and upper part of the wings, and a part of the tail, are enlivened with a bright scarlet, or a beautiful blue. The Pellican, or Onocrontalus, known to the Spaniards of Mexico by the name of *Alcatraz*, is sufficiently known by that great pouch or *venter*, as Pliny calls it, which is under its bill. There are two species of this bird in Mexico; the one having a smooth bill, the other a notched one. Although the Europeans are acquainted with this bird, I do not know whether they are equally well acquainted with the singular circumstance of its assisting the sick or hurt of its own species; a circumstance which the Americans sometimes take advantage of, to procure fish without trouble. They take a live pelican, break its wing, and after tying it to a tree, conceal themselves in the neighbourhood; there they watch the coming of the other pelicans with their provisions, and as soon as they see these throw up the fish from their pouch, run in, and after leaving a little for the captive bird, they carry off the rest.

But if the Pelican is admirable for its attention to the others of its species, the *Yoaquachilli*, is no less wonderful on account of the arms with which the Creator has provided it for its defence. This is a small aquatic bird; with a long, narrow neck, a small head; a long, yellow bill, long legs, feet, and claws, and a short tail. The legs and feet are ash-coloured; the body is black; with some yellow feathers about the belly. Upon its head is a little circle or coronet, of a horny substance, which is divided into three very sharp points; and it has two others upon the forepart of the wings (z).

In the other classes of birds some are valuable upon account of their flesh, some for their plumage, and some for their song;

(z) In Brasil, also, there is an aquatic bird with weapons of this kind; but which, in other respects, is a very different bird.



BOOK I. while others engage our attention by their extraordinary instinct, or some other remarkable quality.

Of the birds which afford a wholesome and agreeable food, I have counted more than seventy species. Besides the common fowls, which were brought from the Canary Isles to the Antilles, and from these to Mexico, there were, and still are fowls peculiar to that country; which as they partly resemble the common fowl, and partly the peacock, were called *Gallipavos*\* by the Spaniards, and *Huexolotl* and *Totolin* by the Mexicans. These birds being carried to Europe in return for the common fowls, have multiplied very fast; and especially in Italy, where, on account of their manners and their size, they gave them the name of *Gallinacci* (a); but the European fowl has increased greatly more in Mexico. There are likewise wild fowls in great plenty, exactly like the tame, but larger, and in many places of a much sweeter flesh. There are partridges, quails, pheasants, cranes, turtle-doves, pigeons, and a great variety of others, that are esteemed in Europe. The reader will form some idea of the immense number of quails when we shall come to speak of the ancient sacrifices. The pheasants are different from the pheasants of Europe, and are of three kinds (b). The *Coxolitli* and *Tépetototl*, which are both the size of a goose, with a crest upon their heads, which they can raise and depress at pleasure, are distinguishable by their colour, and some particular qualities. The *Coxolitli*, called by the Spaniards, Royal Pheasant, has a tawney-coloured plumage; and its flesh is more delicate than that of the other. The *Tépetototl* will sometimes be so tame as to pick from its master's hand; to run to meet him, with signs of joy, when he comes home; to learn to shut the door with its bill; and in every thing show greater docility than could be expected in a bird which is properly an inhabitant of the woods. I have seen one of these pheasants which, after being some time in a poultry yard, had learnt to fight in the manner of cocks, and would fight with them, erecting

(a) In Bologna, they are called *Tocchi* and *Tocchini*, and in other places, *Galli d'India*. The French call them *Dindes*, *Dindons*, and *Cogs d'Inde*.

(b) Bomare reckons the *Huatzin* among the pheasants; but for what reason, I do not know, as the *Huatzin* belongs with crows, zopilots and others, to the second class; the birds of prey.

\* In English, the Turkey.

the feathers of his crest, as the cocks do those of the neck. Its feathers are of a shining black, and its legs and feet ash-coloured. The pheasants of the third species, called by the Spaniards, *Gritones*, that is, screamers, are smaller than the other two; with a brown body, and a black tail and wings. The *Chachalaca*, the flesh of which is very good eating, is about the size of the common fowl. The upper part of the body is of a brown colour, the under part whitish, and the bill and feet blueish. It is inconceivable what a noise these birds make in the woods, with their cries; which, although they somewhat resemble the cackling of fowls, are much louder, more constant, and more disagreeable. There are several species of turtle-doves, and pigeons, some common to Europe, others peculiar to those countries.

The birds valuable for their plumage are so many and so beautiful, that we should afford a greater pleasure to our readers, if we could bring them before their eyes, with all the colours which adorn them. I have reckoned five and thirty species of Mexican birds, that are superlatively beautiful; of some of which I must take particular notice.

The *Huitzitzilin* is that wonderful little bird so often celebrated by the historians of America, for its smallness, its activity, the singular beauty of its plumage, the thinness of its food, and the length of its sleep in the winter. That sleep, or rather state of immobility, occasioned by the numbness or torpor of its limbs, has been often required to be proved in legal form, in order to convince some incredulous Europeans; an incredulity arising from ignorance alone, as the same kind of torpor takes place in many parts of Europe, in dormice, hedge-hogs, swallows, bats, and other animals whose blood is of the same temperature; although perhaps it does not continue so long in any of them as in the *Huitzitzilin*, which in some countries remains without motion from October to April. There are nine species of *Huitzitzilin*, differing in size and colour (c).

The

(c) The Spaniards of Mexico call this bird *Chupamirto*, because it sucks chiefly the flowers of a plant known there, though very improperly, by the name of a Myrtle. In



## BOOK I.

The *Tlaubquechol* is an aquatic bird of some size, with feathers of a beautiful scarlet colour, or a reddish-white, except those of the neck, which are black. It lives upon the sea-shores, and by the sides of rivers; and lives only upon live fish, never touching any thing that is dead.

The *Nepapantototl*, is a wild duck which frequents the lake of Mexico, and seems to have all the colours together assembled in its plumage.

The *Tlacuiloltototl*, or painted bird, justly deserves its name; for its beautiful feathers are variegated with red, blue, purple, green, and black. Its eyes are black, with a yellow iris; and the feet ash-coloured.

The *Tzinizcan* is of the size of a pigeon, with a small, crooked, yellow bill. The head and neck are like those of a pigeon, but adorned with shining green feathers; the breast and belly are white except near the tail, which is variegated with white and blue; the tail is green upon the upper side, and black underneath; the wings are partly black, and partly white; and the eyes are black, with reddish yellow irides. This bird lives upon the sea-coasts.

The *Mezcanauhtli*, is a wild duck, about as large as a domestic fowl, but of singular beauty. Its bill is pretty long and broad, azure above, and black upon the under-side; the feathers of the body are white, and marked with numerous black spots. The wings are white and brown on the under-side, and upon the upper-side variegated with black, white, blue, green, and tawny-colour. Its feet are of a yellowish red; its head brown, and tawny-coloured, and partly purple, with a beautiful white spot betwixt the eyes and bill: the eyes are black; and the tail is blue above, brown below, and white at its extremity.

The *Tlaubtototl* is extremely like the *Tlacuiloltototl* in its colours, but is smaller. The Huacamaye and the Cardinals, so much prized by the Europeans, upon account of their fine colours, are very common in this country.

All these beautiful birds and others peculiar to Mexico, besides some which have been brought thither from the countries adjacent,

other parts of America, it is called *Chupaflor*, *Picaflor*, *Tominejo*, *Colibre*, &c. Among the numerous authors who describe this precious little bird, no one gives a better idea of the beauty of its plumage than Acoffa.

are

are of great value to the Mexicans, in their singular works of Mosaic, which we shall mention in another place. Peacocks have been carried there from the old continent, but they have not been attended to; and have, therefore, propagated very slowly.

Many authors, who allow to the birds of Mexico a superiority in the beauty of their plumage, have denied them that of song: but we can with perfect confidence affirm, that that opinion has not been formed upon real observation, but has proceeded from ignorance, as it is more difficult for Europeans to hear the Mexican birds than to see them.

There are in Mexico, as well as in Europe, gold-finches and nightingales, and at least two-and-twenty species besides, of singing birds, which are little or nothing inferior to these; but all that we are acquainted with are surpassed by the very famous *Centzontli*, so named by the Mexicans to express the wonderful variety of its notes (*d*). It is impossible to give any idea of the sweetness and mellowness of its song, of the harmony and variety of its tones, or of the facility with which it learns to imitate whatever it hears. It counterfeits naturally, not only the notes of other birds, but even the different noises of quadrupeds. It is of the size of a common thrush. Its body is white upon the under-side, and grey above; with some white feathers, especially about the head and tail. It eats any thing, but delights chiefly in flies, which it will pick from one's finger with signs of pleasure. The *Centzontli* is to be found every where in great numbers; yet they are so much esteemed, that I have seen five-and-twenty crowns paid for one. Attempts have often been made to bring it to Europe, but I do not know if they ever succeeded: and I am persuaded that, although it could be brought to Europe alive, yet it could not be, without injuring its voice and other qualifications, by a change of climate and the hardships of a voyage.

(*d*) *Centzontlatotli*, (for that is the real name, and *Centzontli* is but an abbreviation) means the many-voiced. The Mexicans use the word *Centzontli* (four hundred) as the Latins did *mille & sexcenti*, to express an indefinite and innumerable multitude. The Greek name of *Polyglotta*, which some modern Ornithologists apply to it, corresponds to the Mexican name. See further what we say of *Centzontli*, in our dissertations.



## BOOK I.

The birds called Cardinals, are not less delightful to the ear, from the sweetness of their song, than to the sight, by the beauty of their scarlet plumage, and crest. The Mexican Calandra sings very sweetly also, and its song resembles that of the nightingale. Its feathers are varied with white, yellow, and grey. It weaves its nest in a wonderful manner, with hairs pasted together with some kind of viscid substance, and suspending like a little bag, from the bough of a tree. The *Tigrillo*, or little Tiger, which is likewise of some value upon account of its music, is so named from its feathers being spotted like the skin of a tiger. The *Cuitlaccochi* resembles the Centzontli, in the excellence of its song, as well as in size and colour, as the *Coxtototl* exactly does the Canary bird, brought thither from the Canaries. The Mexican Sparrows, called *Gorriones* by the Spaniards, are nothing like the real sparrows, except in their size, their manner of hopping, and in making their nests in the holes of walls. Their body is white upon the under-side, and grey upon the upper; but at a certain age, the heads of some become red, and others yellow (*e*). Their flight is laborious, from the smallness of their wings, or the weakness of their feathers. Their song is most delightful and various. There are great numbers of these singing birds in the capital, and the other cities and villages of Mexico.

The talking birds too, or those which imitate the human voice, are to be found in equal abundance, in the country of Anahuac. Even among the singing birds there are some which learn a few words; such as the celebrated Centzontli, and the *Acolchichi*, or bird with the red back, which from that mark the Spaniards have called the *Commendador*. The *Cebuan*, which is bigger than a common thrush, counterfeits the human voice, but in a tone that appears burlesqued; and will follow travellers a great way. The *Tzanabuei* resembles the magpie in size, but is of a different colour. It learns to speak, steals cunningly whatever it can get, and in every respect shows a kind of instinct superior to what we generally observe in other birds. But of all the speaking birds, the parrots hold the first place; of which they reckon, in Mexico, four principal

(*e*) I have heard it said, that the *Gorriones* with red heads are the males; and those with yellow heads, the females.

species, namely, the *Huacamaya*, the *Toznenetl*, the *Cochotl*, and the *Quiltototl* (f).

The *Huacamaya*, the largest of all the parrots, is more valuable for its beautiful feathers than for its speaking. It articulates words indistinctly, and its voice is harsh and disagreeable. The *Toznenetl*, which is the best of them all, is about the size of a pigeon; its feathers are of a green colour, except upon the head, and fore-part of the wings, which in some of them are red, and in others yellow. It learns any words or tune, and imitates them faithfully. It naturally imitates the laugh of a man, or other ridiculous sound, the cries of children, and the various noises of different animals. There are three species of the *Cochotl* differing from each other in size and plumage, which in them all is beautiful; and the prevailing colour is green. The largest of the *Cochotls* is nearly as large as the *Toznenetl*: the two other species, called by the Spaniards, *Catherine*, are smaller. They all learn to talk, though not so perfectly as the *Toznenetl*. The *Quiltototl*, is the smallest kind of parrot, and the least valuable for speaking. These small parrots whose plumage is of the most beautiful green, fly always in large flocks, sometimes making a great noise in the air; and at other times committing havoc among the grain. When perched upon the trees they can hardly be distinguished, by their colour from the leaves. All the other parrots go generally in pairs, a male and female.

The *Madrugadores* (g), which we shall call the *Awakeners*, or *Twilight* birds, and which are called by the Mexicans *Tzacua*, although they are not so remarkable for beauty or song, deserve particular notice for some other qualities. These birds are the last among the day birds to go to roost at night, and the first to leave it in the morning, and to announce the return of the sun. They never cease to sing and frolic, till an hour after sun-set; begin again long before the dawn, and never seem so happy as during the morning

(f) The *Toznenetl* and *Cochotl*, are called by the Mexican Spaniards, *Pericos* and *Loros*. The word *Huacamaya* is from the Haitinian language which was spoken in Hispaniola. *Loro*, is from the Quichoan or Incan, and *Toznenetl*, *Cochotl*, and *Quiltototl* from the Mexican.

(g) *Madrugador*, in Spanish means *early riser*; but as there is no word in Italian that answers to it; the author has employed that of *Destatore* or *Awakener*. He seems to think, however, that the name of *Uccello crepuscolare* or *Twilight* bird, would be more applicable.



BOOK I. and evening twilight. About an hour before the break of day, one of them begins from the bough of a tree where he has passed the night along with many others of his species, to call them, with a shrill, clear note, which he continually repeats with a tone of gladness, till some of his companions hear and answer him. When they are all awake, they make a very chearful noise, which may be heard at a great distance. In the journies I have made through the kingdom of Michuacan, where they abound, they were of some use to me, as they always roused me in time, to allow me to set out by the break of day. These birds are about as large as sparrows.

The Tzacua, a bird which resembles the above mentioned Calandra in size, in colour, and in the form of its nest is still more surprising. These birds live in society; and every tree is to them a village, composed of a great number of nests, all hanging from the boughs. One of them which does the office of the head or the guard of the village, resides in the middle of the tree; from which it flies about from one nest to another, visiting them all, and after singing a little while, returns to its place; while the rest remain perfectly silent. If any bird of a different species approaches the tree, he flies to it, and endeavours, with his bill and wings, to drive it off; but if a man, or any other large animal comes near, he flies screaming to another tree, and if at that time any *Tzacuas* belonging to the same village happen to be returning from the fields, he meets them, and changing his note, obliges them to retire again: as soon as he perceives the danger over, he returns happy to his wonted round of visiting the nests. These observations upon the Tzacua, made by a man of penetration, learning, and veracity (*b*), should make us expect to find some things still more extraordinary in these birds, if the observations were repeated; but we must now leave these pleasant objects, and turn our eyes upon some that are of the most disagreeable kind.

SECT. XII.  
Reptiles of  
Mexico.

The reptiles of Mexico may be reduced to two orders or classes; namely, the four-footed, and the *apodes* or those without feet (*i*). In

(*b*) The Abbé D. Giuseppe Rafaele Campoi.

(*i*) I am perfectly aware of the variety of opinions entertained by different authors, with respect to the animals which ought to be classed among the reptiles: but as I do not undertake to give an exact arrangement, but merely to present them in some order to the reader, I take the term of *Reptile*, in the same sense in which it was commonly understood of old.

the

the first class are crocodiles, lizards, frogs and toads: in the second all kinds of serpents.

The Mexican crocodiles resemble the African in size, form, voracity, way of living, and in all the other peculiarities of their character. They abound in many of the lakes and rivers in the hot countries, and destroy men and other animals. It would be altogether superfluous to give any description of these terrible animals, when so much has been written about them in other books.

Among the greater lizards we reckon the *Acaltetepon*, and the *Iguana*. The *Acaltetepon*, known to the Spaniards by the very improper name of *Scorpions*, are two lizards which resemble each other in colour and in form, but very different in their size and tails. The smallest is about fifteen inches, with a long tail, short legs, a red, broad, cloven tongue, a grey rough skin covered with white warts like pearls, a sluggish pace, and a fierce aspect. From the muscles of the hind-legs to the extremity of the tail, its skin is crossed with yellow lines in the form of rings. The bite of this animal is painful, but not mortal as some have imagined. It is peculiar to the warmer climates. The other lizard is an inhabitant of the same climate, but twice as large, being, according to the report of some who have seen it, about two feet and a half long, and more than a foot thick round the back and belly. It has a short tail, with a thick head and legs. This lizard is the scourge of rabbits.

The Iguana is a harmless lizard, sufficiently known in Europe from the accounts of American historians. They abound in the warm countries, and are of two kinds, the one a land animal, and the other amphibious. Some of them have been found as long as three feet. They run with great speed, and are very nimble in climbing trees. Their eggs and flesh are eatable, and praised by some authors, but their flesh is hurtful to those labouring under the French disease.

Of the smaller lizards there are a great many species, differing in size, colour, and other circumstances; of which some are poisonous, and others harmless. Among the latter the first place is due to theameleon, called by the Mexicans *Quatapalcatl*. This resembles the commonameleon almost in every respect, but differs in having no crest, and in having large, round, open ears. Among the other lizards



BOOK I. of the harmless kind, there is none worth notice but the *Tapayaxin* (*k*), which is remarkable for its shape and some other peculiarities. It is perfectly round, cartilaginous, and feels very cold to the touch: the diameter of its body is six inches. Its head is very hard, and spotted with various colours. It is so lazy and sluggish, that it does not move even although it is shaken. When its head is struck, or its eyes pressed, it darts out from them, to about two or three paces distance, a few drops of blood; but is in every thing else an inoffensive animal, and seems to take pleasure in being handled. It would seem as if, being of so cold a constitution, it received some comfort from the heat of the hand.

Among the poisonous lizards, the worst seems to be that one which, from its being uncommon, got the name of *Tetzauhuqui* with the Mexicans. It is very small, of a grey colour, which is of a yellowish hue upon the body, and blueish upon the tail. There are some others reckoned venomous, and known by the Spaniards by the name of *Salamanquesas*, or that of *Scorpions* (for this name is applied to many reptiles by the vulgar): but I am certain, from many observations, that those lizards are either entirely void of poison, or at least, if they have any, it is not so active as is generally imagined. We may make the same remark with respect to toads, as we have never seen or heard of any bad effects occasioned by their venom, although in many warm and humid places the earth is entirely covered with them. In those places there are some toads of eight inches diameter.

In the lake of Chalco there are three very numerous species of frogs, of three very different sizes and colours, and very common at the tables in the capital. Those of Huasteca are excellent, and will sometimes weigh a Spanish pound: but I never saw or heard in that country the tree frogs, which are so common in Italy and other parts of Europe.

The serpents are of much greater variety than the reptiles already mentioned, there being many of different sizes and colours, some poisonous and others innocent.

The most considerable in point of size seems to have been one called *Canaubcoatl* by the Mexicans. It was about three Parisian perches

(*k*) See this lizard in our plate.

long,

long, and of the thickness of a middle sized man. One of the *Tlilcoas*, or black serpents, which Hernandez saw in the mountains of Tepoztlan, was not quite so large; which, although it was not equal in thickness, yet was ten Spanish cubits, or more than sixteen Parisian feet long. Such monstrous serpents are seldom to be found now adays, unless in some solitary wood, at a distance from the capital.

The most remarkable of the poisonous serpents are the *Abueyaēlli*, the *Cuicuilcoatl*, the *Teixminani*, the *Cencoatl*, and the *Teotlacozaubqui*.

The *Teotlacozaubqui*, of which there are several species, is the famous rattle-snake. Its colour and size are various, but it is commonly three or four feet long. The rattle may be considered as an appendix to the vertebræ, and consists of rings of a horny substance, moveable, and connected with each other by means of articulations or joints, every one being composed of three small bones (*l*). The rattle sounds whenever the snakes moves, and particularly when he is in motion to bite. This snake moves with great rapidity, and upon that account it likewise obtained among the Mexicans the name of *Ebecacoatl*, or aerial serpent. Its bite is attended with certain death, unless remedies are speedily applied, among which the most effectual is thought to be the holding of the wounded part some time in the earth. It bites with two teeth placed in the upper jaw, which as in the viper and other species of serpents, are moveable, hollow, and pierced at the extremity. The poison, which is a yellowish crystallizable liquor, is contained in some glands which lie over the roots of those two teeth. These glands being compressed in the action of biting, dart through the hollow of the teeth the fatal liquid, and pour it by the apertures into the wound and the mass of blood. We should have been glad to communicate to the public several other observations which we have made upon this subject, if the nature of this history should have permitted it (*m*).

The *Abueyaēlli* is not very different from the snake just described, except in having no rattle. This snake, as we are told by Hernandez,

(*l*) Hernandez says, that a new ring is added every year, and that the number of the rings correspond with the years of the snake's age: but we do not know whether this is founded upon his own observations or the reports of others.

(*m*) Father Inamma, a Jesuit missionary of California, has made many experiments upon snakes, which serve to confirm those made by Mead upon vipers.



## BOOK I.

communicates that kind of poison called by the ancients *Hemorrhoids*, which occasions the blood to burst from the mouth, nose, and eyes of the person who has received it. There are certain antidotes, however, which prevent these virulent effects.

The *Cuicuilcoatl*, so named from the variety of its colours, is not quite eight inches long, and of the thickness of the little finger; but its poison is as active as that of the *Teotlacozauiqui*.

The *Teixminani* is that kind of serpent which Pliny calls *Jaculum*. It is of a long slender form, with a grey-coloured back and a purple belly. It moves always in a straight line, and never coils, but springs from the trees upon passengers, and has thence derived its name (*n*). These snakes are to be found in the mountains of *Quauhnahuac*, and in other hot countries; but I never knew any instance of such a thing happening to any traveller, although I lived so many years in that kingdom; and I can say the same thing of the terrible effects ascribed to the *Ahueyaotli*.

The *Cencoatl* (*o*), which is also a poisonous snake, is about five feet long, and eight inches round at the thickest part. The most remarkable quality of this snake is its shining in the dark. Thus does the provident Author of nature, by various impressions on our senses, at one time upon our ears by the noise of a rattle, at another time upon our eyes by the impressions of light, awake our attention to guard against approaching danger.

Among the harmless snakes, of which there are several kinds, we cannot pass over the *Txicatlinan*, and the *Maquizcoatl*. The *Txicatlinan* is very beautiful, about a foot in length, and of the thickness of the little finger. It lives always in ant-hills; and it takes so much pleasure in being among ants, that it will accompany these insects upon their expeditions, and return with them to their usual nest. The Mexican name *Txicatlinan*, signifies *mother of ants*, and that is the name given it by the Spaniards; but I suspect that all the attachment which this little snake shews to ant-hills, proceeds only from its living upon the ants themselves.

(*n*) The Mexicans give this snake the name also of *Micoatl*; the Spaniards that of *Satilla*, both signifying the same thing with the *Jaculum* of the Latins.

(*o*) There are some other species of snakes which having the same colours with the *Cencoatl*, go by the same name, but they are all of a harmless nature.

The *Maquizcoatl* is about the same size but of a shining silvery hue. The tail is thicker than the head, and this snake can move progressively with either extremity at pleasure. It is called by the Greeks *Amphisbæna* (*p*); it is a very rare species, and has never been seen as far as I know, in any other place than the valley of Toluca.

Of all the variety of snakes which are found in the unfrequented woods of that kingdom, I believe that no viviparous species has been discovered, except the acoatl or water-snake, which too is only supposed, but not certainly known, to be viviparous. That snake is about twenty inches long and one thick: its teeth are exceeding small, the upper part of the head is black, the sides of it are blue, and the under part yellow. The back is striped with blue and black, the belly is entirely blue.

The ancient Mexicans who took delight in rearing all kinds of animals, and who by long familiarity lost that horror which such animals naturally inspire, used to catch in the fields a little green harmless snake, which being brought up at home, and well fed, would sometimes grow to the size of a man. It was generally kept in a tub, which it never left but to receive its food from its master's hand; which it would take, either mounted upon his shoulder or coiled about his legs.

If from the land we now turn our eyes to the rivers, lakes, and seas of Anahuac, we shall find in them a much greater variety of creatures. Even the known species of their fish are innumerable; for of those only which serve for the nourishment of man, I have counted upwards of a hundred species, without reckoning the turtle, crab, lobster, or any other testaceous or crustaceous animal. Of the fish, some are common to both the seas; some are peculiar to the Mexican gulf alone, others to the Pacific Ocean; and some are to be found only in the lakes and rivers.

The fish common to both the seas are whales, dolphins, sword-fish, saw-fish, tiburones, manatis, mantas, porpoises, bonitas, cod, mullets,

(*p*) Pliny, in lib. viii. cap. 23, gives the *Amphisbæna* two heads; but the Greek name means nothing more than the double motion. The two-headed serpent of Pliny has been seen in Europe, and some have asserted that it is to be met with in Mexico, but I do not know that that any one has seen it. If it has been found in that country, it cannot be considered as a natural species, but rather as a monster, like the two-headed eagle found a few years since in Oaaca, and sent to the Catholic king.

SECT. XIII.  
The fish of the seas, rivers, and lakes of Anahuac.



BOOK I. thornbacks, barbels, flying-fish, shad, lobsters, soles, and a great many others, together with several species of tortoises, polypus, crabs, sponges, &c.

The Mexican gulf, besides those already mentioned, affords sturgeons, pike, congers, turbot, lampreys, cuttle-fish, anchovies, carp, eels, nautiluses, &c.

In the Pacific Ocean, besides those common to the two seas, there are salmons, tunnies, sea scorpions, herrings, and others.

In the lakes and rivers, are three or four kinds of white fish, carp, mullet, trout, barbels, eels, and many others.

As the particular description of these fish would be foreign to the object of our history, and of little use to the European reader, we shall only take notice of a few of the more remarkable circumstances with respect to them.

The *Tiburón* belongs to that class of sea-animals called by the ancients *Caniculæ*. Its great voracity, its size, strength, and swiftness, are well known. It has two, three, and sometimes more rows of sharp strong teeth, and swallows whatever is thrown to it whether eatable or not. A whole sheep's skin, and even a large butcher's knife, has been found in its belly. This fish frequently accompanies vessels, and by Oviedo's account there have been Tiburones, which have kept up with a vessel in full sail with a fair wind, for five hundred miles, and often swimming round the ship to catch any filth that was thrown from it.

The *Manati* or *Lamentin*, as it is called by some, is a larger fish than the *Tiburón*, and of a very different disposition. Oviedo says, that *Manatis* have been caught of such a size as to require a cart, with two pair of oxen to draw them. It is like the *Tiburón* viviparous, but the female brings only one young one at a time, which, however, is of a great size (*r*). The flesh of this animal is delicate, and something like

(*r*) Buffon agrees with Hernandez in saying that the *Manati* brings but one young one at a time; but other persons affirm that she brings two. Perhaps the same thing takes place with the *Manati* as with the human species; which is commonly to have only one, but sometimes to have two or more. Hernandez describes the copulation of these animals in these words; *Humano more coit, fœmina supina fere tota in littore procumbente, et celeritate quadam superveniente mare*. We do not with some modern naturalists rank the *Manati* among quadrupeds,

like veal. Some authors place the Manati in the class of amphibious animals, but improperly, as it is never upon land; but only raises its head, and a part of its body, out of the water, to browse upon the herbage which grows along the banks of the rivers (*s*).

The *Manta* is that flat fish mentioned by Ulloa and others, which is so hurtful to the pearl-fishers, and which I have no doubt is the same with that which Pliny has described, though he seems not to have been very well acquainted with it, under the name of *Nubes* or *Nebula* (*t*). It is not improbable, that this fish has made its way into these seas from those of the old world in the same manner as some others appear to have done. The strength of this fish is so great that it will not only strangle a man whom it embraces or winds itself about, but it has even been seen to take the cable of an anchor and move it from the place where it had been cast. It has been called *Manta*, because when it lies stretched upon the sea, as it frequently does, it seems like a fleece of wool floating upon the water.

The sword-fish of these seas is quite different from that of Greenland. The sword is larger, and in its figure more nearly resembling a real sword; and is not placed in the same manner with that of the Greenland fish upon the hinder part, but upon the fore part of the

ped, although it is viviparous; because every one by the name of quadruped understands an animal with four feet, but the Manati has only two, and these imperfectly formed.

(*s*) Mr. de la Condamine confirms our observation with respect to the Manati's living constantly in water, and the same thing had been said two centuries before by two eye-witnesses Oviedo and Hernandez. It is true, that Hernandez does seem to say the contrary; but this is owing merely to a typographical error, which is obvious to every reader. I should mention likewise, that the Manati, although properly a sea-animal, is frequently to be found in rivers.

(*t*) *Ipsi ferunt (Urinatores) et nubem quandam crassescere super capita, planorum piscium similem, prementem eos, arcentemque a reciprocando et ob id stilos præacutos lineis annexos habere sese; quia in si perfossæ ita, non recedant, caliginis et pavoris, ut arbitror, opere. Nubem enim sive nebulam (cujus nomine id malum appellant) inter animalia hand ullam reperit quisquam.* Plin. Histor. Nat. lib. ix. cap. 46. The account given of this *cloud* by those divers is much the same with that which the divers in the American seas give of themanta, and the name of the *cloud* is perfectly applicable to it, as it really seems to be a cloud to those who are in the water below it; our swimmers likewise carry long knives, or sharp sticks, for the purpose of dispersing this animal. This observation which has escaped all the interpreters of Pliny, was made by my countryman and friend the Abbé D. Jos. Raf. Campoi, a man not less distinguished by his manners and integrity, than by his eloquence and erudition, particularly in the Latin language, in History, in Criticism, and in Geography. His death upon the 29th of December, 1777, prevented his finishing several very useful works which he had begun.

body,



## BOOK I.

body, like the saw-fish. It moves this sword at pleasure, with great force, and employs it as an offensive weapon.

Of the two species of saw-fish to be found in those seas, the one is that common one known to Pliny, and described by so many naturalists. The other, which is about a foot in length, has a row of teeth or prickles like a saw, upon its back, which has obtained it the name of *Tlateconi*, from the Mexicans, and from the Spaniards that of *Sierra*.

The Roballo is one of the most numerous species, and affords the most delicate food, especially the kind peculiar to rivers. Hernandez took this fish to be the same with the *Lupus* of the ancients, and Campoi imagined it to be the *Afellus Minor*; but this must have been altogether conjecture, for the descriptions of those fish left us by the ancients are so imperfect, that it is impossible to ascertain their identity.

The Gobbo (called by the Spaniards *Corcoboda*), was so called from a rising or prominence reaching from the neck to the mouth, which latter part is exceedingly small. The Sfirena had likewise the name of *Picuda* (which we might translate long-snout), from the lower jaw being longer than the upper.

The Rospo is a very disagreeable fish to look at; of a perfectly round shape, three or four inches in diameter, and without scales. It affords a pleasant wholesome food.

Among the eels there is one called *Huitzitzilmichin* by the Mexicans, which is about three feet long and very slender. Its body is covered with a sort of small plates, instead of scales. The snout is about eight inches in length, with the upper jaw longer than the lower, in which it differs from all other eels, which this species likewise surpasses, as well in the delicacy of its flesh as in the size of its body.

The Bobo, is a very fine fish, about two feet long, and four or six inches broad at the broadest part; and is in high esteem as an excellent food. The river Barbel, known by the name of Bagre, is of the same size with the Bobo, and of exquisite flavour, but unwholesome till it is cleansed with lemon juice, or some other acid, from a certain kind of froth or viscid liquor which adheres to it.

The

The Bobos, I believe are got only in the rivers which fall into the Mexican gulf, and the Barbels in those which discharge themselves into lakes, or into the Pacific Ocean. The flesh of these two kinds, although very delicate, does not equal that of the Pampano, and the Colombella, which are deservedly esteemed superior to all others.

The Curvina is about a foot and a half long, of a slender, round shape, and of a blackish purple colour. In the head of this fish are found, two small, white stones like alabaster, each an inch and a half long, and about four lines broad, of which three grains taken in water, are thought to be useful in a stoppage of urine.

The Botetto is a small fish, not more than eight inches in length, but excessively thick. This fish, while it lies alive upon the beach, immediately swells, whenever it is touched, to an enormous size; and boys often take pleasure in making it burst with a kick. The liver is so poisonous as to kill with strong convulsions in half an hour after it is eaten.

The Occhione (*u*), is a flat, round fish of eight or ten inches diameter. The underpart of the body is perfectly flat, but the upper is convex; and in the center, which is the highest part, it has a single eye as large as that of an ox, and furnished with its necessary eye-lids. The eye remains open even after it is dead, which sometimes creates a degree of horror to a spectator (*x*).

The *Ixtacmichin*, or white fish, has always been in great repute in Mexico, and is now as common at the Spanish tables as it used to be anciently at those of the Mexicans. There are three or four species. The *Amilotl*, which is the largest and the most esteemed, is more than a foot in length, and has two fins upon the back, two at the sides, and one under the belly. The *Xalmichin* seems to be of the same kind with the former, but not quite so large. The *Jacapitzahuac*, which is the smallest kind, is not more than eight

(*u*) This fish, which is only found in California, either has no name, or we, at least, are not acquainted with it; for which reason we have given it one, we think, sufficiently applicable, namely, that of Occhione.

(*x*) Campoi was persuaded that the Occhione is the *Uranoscopus*, or *Callionymos* of Pliny: but Pliny has not left any description of that fish. The name of *Uranoscopus*, which was the only foundation of Campoi's opinion, is equally applicable to all those fish which, having eyes upon the head, look upwards to the sky, such as skates, and other flat fish.



BOOK I. inches long, and one inch and a half broad. All these kinds have scales, are a very delicate and wholesome food, and are to be found in great plenty in the lakes of Chalco, Pazcuaro, and Chapalla. The fourth kind is the *Xalmichin* of Quauhnahuac, which has no scales, but is covered with a tender white skin.

The *Axolotl* or Axolote (*y*), is a great water-lizard of the Mexican lake. Its figure and appearance are ridiculous and disagreeable. It is commonly about eight inches long, but is sometimes to be found of twice that length. The skin is soft and black, the head and tail long, the mouth large, and the tongue broad, thin, and cartilaginous. The body gradually diminishes in size, from the middle to the extremity of the tail. It swims with its four feet which resemble those of a frog. But the most remarkable circumstance with respect to this animal, which has been established by many observations, and confirmed by the opinion of Hernandez, is the uterus, and a periodical evacuation of blood to which it is subject; in both which it is said to resemble the human species (*z*). The Axolotl is wholesome to eat, and is of much the same taste with an eel. It is thought to be particularly useful in cases of consumption.

There are many other kinds of small fish, in the lake of Mexico, but they scarcely deserve our notice.

As to shells, they are found in prodigious numbers, and of great variety; and some of them of extraordinary beauty, especially those of the Pacific Ocean. Pearls also have been fished, at different times, along all the coasts of that sea. The Mexicans got them upon the coasts of Tototepec, and of the Cuitlatecans, where we now get the tortoise-shell. Among the Sea-stars is one which has five rays, and

(*y*) Mr. Bomare could not light upon the name of this fish. He calls it *Azalotl*, *Axolotl*, *Azoloti*, and *Axoloti*; and says that the Spaniards call it *Juguete del' agua*: yet the Mexicans call it *Axolotl*, and the Spaniards give it no other name but the *Axolote*.

(*z*) Bomare has some hesitation in believing what is said of the *Axolote*; but while we may rest secure upon the testimony of those persons, who have had these animals actually under their own inspection, we need not pay much regard to the doubts of a Frenchman, who, however versed in Natural History, never saw the Axolotis, and is even ignorant of their name: more especially, when we reflect that the periodical evacuation of blood is not confined to women alone, but has been observed, likewise, in apes; for, as Mr. Bomare says, *Les femelles des singes ont pour la plupart des menstrues comme les femmes*.

*King of the Zopilots*



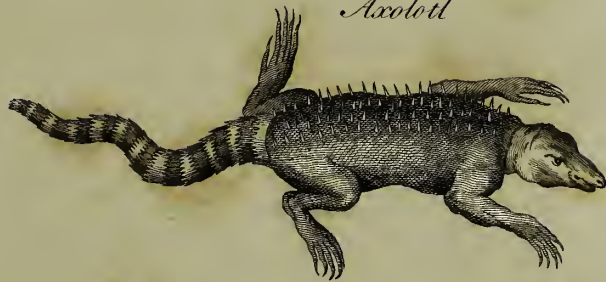
*Amphisbaena*



*Occhione*



*Axolottl*



*Temolin*







one eye in each. Of Sponges, and Lithophyts, there are many rare and singular species. Hernandez gives us a print of a sponge, sent to him from the Pacific Ocean, which was of the shape of a man's hand, but with ten or more fingers; of a clay colour, with black points and red streaks, and was harder than the common sponges.

BOOK I.

Descending, at length, to the smaller creatures, in which the power and wisdom of the Creator especially appear; we shall divide the innumerable multitude of Mexican insects into three classes, the flying, the terrestrial, and the aquatic; although there are land and water insects which afterwards become flying insects, and might be considered as belonging to different classes, at different times.

SECT. XIV.  
The Insects  
of Mexico.

Among the flying insects are, beetles, bees, wasps, flies, gnats, butterflies, and grasshoppers. The beetles are of several kinds, and mostly harmless. Some of them are of a green colour, and called by the Mexicans, *Majatl*; which, by the great noise they make in flying, afford amusement to children. There are others black, of a disagreeable smell and irregular form, which are called *Pinacatl*.

The *Cucujo* or shining beetle, which best deserves our notice, has been mentioned by many authors, but not hitherto, as far as I know, described by any one. It is more than an inch in length; and, like other flying beetles, is furnished with double wings. Upon the head, is a small, moveable horn, which is of great use to it; for if at any time it happens to be turned over and laid upon its back, it is by means of this horn, by thrusting and pressing it into a membrane somewhat like a bag, which it has upon the belly, that this insect recovers its natural position. Near the eyes are two small membranes, and upon the belly one somewhat larger, of a thin, transparent substance, which are full of luminous matter, affording a light strong enough to read by, and to shew the way to those who travel at night. It shews most light when it flies; but none at all while it sleeps, as it is then covered with the other opaque membranes. The luminous matter is a white, mealy, viscid substance, which preserves its luminous quality after it has been taken from the body of the *Cucujo*, and one may draw shining characters with it, upon a hat. There are great numbers of these flying phosphori upon the sea-coasts, and which form upon the neighbouring



## BOOK I.

bouring hills, at night, a very beautiful and brilliant spectacle. The boys easily catch them by waving a light in the evening, and the beetles, drawn by the light, come into their hands. Some authors have confounded this wonderful insect with the glow-worm, but the latter is much smaller, and much less luminous; is pretty frequent in Europe, and perfectly common in Mexico.

The appearance of the shining beetle is not more pleasing than that of the *Temolin* is disagreeable. This is a large beetle of a reddish chesnut colour, with six hairy feet, and four toes upon each. There are two species of the *Temolin*: the one having one horn, in the forepart of the head; and the other, two.

There are, at least, six different kinds of bees. The first is the same with the common bee of Europe, with which it agrees, not only in size, shape, and colour, but also in its disposition and manners, and in the qualities of its honey and wax. The second species, which differs from the first only in having no sting, is the bee of Yucatan and Chiapa, which makes the fine, clear honey of *Eftabentùn*, of an aromatic flavour, superior to that of all the other kinds of honey with which we are acquainted. The honey is taken from them six times a year, that is, once in every other month; but the best is that which is got in November, being made from a fragrant white flower like Jessamine, which blows in September, called in that country *Eftabentùn*, from which the honey has derived its name (z). The third species resembles in its form, the winged ants, but is smaller than the common bee, and without a sting. This insect, which is peculiar to warm and temperate climates, forms nests, in size and shape resembling sugar-loaves, and even sometimes greatly exceeding these in size, which are suspended from rocks, or from trees, and particularly from the oak. The populousness of these hives are much greater than of those of the common bee. The nymphs of this bee, which are eatable, are white and round, like a pearl. The honey is of a greyish colour, but of a fine flavour. The fourth species is a yellow bee, smaller than the common one, but,

(z) The honey of *Eftabentùn*, is in high estimation with the English and French, who touch at the ports of Yucatan; and I have known the French of Guarico buy it sometimes for the purpose of sending it as a present to the king.

like it, furnished with a sting. Its honey is not equal to those already mentioned. The fifth, is a small bee without a sting, which constructs hives of an orbicular form, in subterraneous cavities; and the honey is sour, and somewhat bitter. The *Tlalpipioli*, which is the sixth species, is black and yellow, of the size of the common bee, but has no sting.

Of wasps there are at least four kinds. The *Quetzalmiabuatl* is the common wasp of Europe. The *Tetlatoca* or wandering wasp, is so called from its frequent change of habitation; and is always found employed in collecting materials to build it. This wasp has a sting, but makes no honey or wax. The *Xicotli* or Xicote, is a thick, black wasp, with a yellow belly; which makes a very sweet honey, in holes made by it in walls. It is provided with a strong sting, which gives a very painful wound. The *Cuicalmiabuatl*, has likewise a sting; but whether it makes honey or not, we do not know.

The *Quaubxicotli*, is a black hornet, with a red tail, whose sting is so large and strong, as not only to go through a sugar cane, but even to pierce into the trunk of a tree.

Among the flies, besides the common fly which is neither so troublesome, nor in such numbers as in Italy during summer (*a*), there are some luminous as the glow-worm. The *Axayacatl* is a marsh-fly, of the Mexican lake, the eggs of which being deposited in immense quantities, upon the rushes and corn-stalks of the lake, form large masses, which are taken up by fishermen and carried to market for sale. This caviare called *Abuaubtli*, which has much the same taste with the caviare of fish, used to be eat by the Mexicans, and is now a common dish among the Spaniards. The Mexicans eat not only the eggs, but the flies themselves made up together into a mass, and prepared with saltpetre.

Gnats, which are so common in Europe, and especially in Italy, abound in the maritime parts of Mexico, and in all places where heat,

(*a*) The same observation has been made before by Oviedo; "In the islands," said he, "and in terra firma, there are very few flies; and in comparison of their numbers in Europe, one might almost say there are none." Nat. Hist. Ind. cap. 81. In Mexico, certainly there are not so few as Oviedo says, but, generally speaking, they are neither so numerous nor so troublesome as in Europe.



BOOK I. standing water, and shrubs, encourage their propagation. They are in immense numbers in the lake of Chalco; but the capital, although near to that lake, is entirely free of that nuisance.

In the hot countries there is likewise a kind of small flies, which make no buz in flying, but raise a violent itching by their puncture, and an open wound is very ready to be made, if the part is scratched.

In those hot countries also, but particularly in those next the sea, *Cucarachas* are found in great numbers. This is a large winged, filthy, pernicious insect, which spoils all eatables, particularly any thing sweet; but in some other respects is of great use in clearing houses of bugs. It has been remarked, that the ships which come from Europe full of bugs, return from New Spain quite freed of these stinking insects, by means of the *Cucarachas* (b).

The Butterflies of Mexico, are much more numerous, and of greater variety, than in Europe. It is impossible to give any idea of their variety and beauty, and the finest pencil is unable to imitate the exquisite colouring and design, which the Author of Nature has displayed in the embellishment of their wings. Many respectable Authors have celebrated them in their writings; and Hernandez has made some be drawn, in order to give Europeans an idea of their beauty.

But the butterflies although numerous, are not to be compared in that respect, with the locusts, which, sometimes darkening the air like thick clouds, fall upon the sea coasts, and lay waste all the vegetation of the country; as I have myself witnessed, in the year 1738, or 1739, upon the coasts of Xicayan. From this cause a great famine was lately occasioned in the Peninsula of Yucatan: but no country has been visited by this dreadful scourge so often as the wretched California (c). Among the land-insects, besides the common ones, about which nothing occurs to me worthy to be mentioned, there

(b) This insect is likewise an enemy of the studios, preying upon the ink, in the night-time, unless it is carefully covered up. The Spaniards call it *Cucaracha*, others call it *Kakerlaques*, and others *Dermeftes*, &c.

(c) In the history of California, which will be published in a few months, will be found a great many observations with respect to locusts, made by the Abbé D. Mich. del Barco, who lived upwards of thirty years in that country, a country not more famous than underserving of the fame it has acquired.

are worms of several kinds, scolopendræ, scorpions, spiders, ants, nigua chegoes or jiggers, and the cochineal.

Of the worms, some are useful, and others pernicious; some served as food to the ancient Mexicans, and others in the way of medicine, as the *Axin* and the *Pollin*, which we shall speak of in another place. The *Tleocuilin* or burning worm, has the same qualities with the *Cantharides*: its head is red, the breast green, and the rest of the body is of a tawny-colour. The *Temahuani*, is a worm covered with yellow, venomous prickles. The *Temictli* resembles the silk-worm, both in its operations and its metamorphoses. The silk-worm was brought from Europe, and was propagated with success. Great plenty of good silk was made, especially in Mizteca (*d*), where it became a great article of trade; but the Miztecans being afterwards, from political causes, forced to abandon it, the rearing of the worms was likewise neglected; and at this time very few are employed in that business. Besides that common silk, there is another excellent kind, very white, soft, and strong, which is often to be found upon trees, in several woods upon the sea coasts, particularly in those years when there is little rain. But, unless by some poor people, this silk is not turned to any use, partly from inattention, to their interests, but chiefly from the obstructions which would be certainly thrown in the way of any one who should attempt a trade of that kind. We know from Cortes's letters to Charles Vth, that silk used to be sold in the markets of Mexico; and some pictures are still preserved, done by the ancient Mexicans upon a paper made of silk.

The Scolopendras are sometimes seen in the temperate parts, but more frequently in the warm and moist. Hernandez says, that he has seen some of them of the length of two feet, and two inches thick: but such monstrous insects can only have been seen in the wettest and most uncultivated place; for we who have been in a great many places, through every variety of climate, never met with any one of such extraordinary size.

Scorpions are common throughout the whole kingdom, but in the cold and temperate countries they are not numerous, nor very hurtful.

(*d*) Some places in Mizteca still preserve the name which they obtained formerly, upon account of that trade; as *silk St. Francis*, *silk Tepexc*.



## BOOK I.

They abound in the hot parts, or where the air is very dry although the heat is but moderate; and their poison is so active as to kill children, and occasion terrible pain to adults. It has been remarked, that the poison of the small, yellowish scorpion is more powerful than that of the large brown one, and that their sting is the most dangerous during those hours of the day when the sun gives most heat.

Among the great variety of spiders, we cannot pass over the Tarantola and Casampulga (*e*). The name of Tarantola is given very improperly, in that country, to a very large spider, the back and legs of which are covered with a fine, soft, blackish down, like that upon young chickens. This spider is peculiar to the hot countries, and is found in houses as well as in the fields. It is supposed to be poisonous, and it is generally believed that if a horse tramples upon one, he very soon loses his hoof; but I have never known a single instance of this happening, although I was for five years in a very hot country where those spiders were in great numbers. The Casampulga is a small spider of the size of a chick pea, with short legs, and a red belly. This spider is venomous, and common in the diocese of Chiapa, and elsewhere. It seems to answer to the description of what is called the Ragno capullino in other countries, but I do not know whether it is the same.

The most common ants of that country are of three kinds: first, the small black ants the same with those of Europe; next, the large red ants called by the Spaniards *bravas*, or fierce, which give very painful wounds with their stings: and lastly, the large brown ants, called by the Spaniards *barrieras*, or carriers, because they are continually employed in carrying grain for their provision, and for that reason they are much more hurtful to the country than the common ants. These carrier ants have been suffered by the carelessness of the inhabitants in some places to multiply to excess; and in the province of Xicayan black lines are seen upon the earth for several miles, which consist of nothing but of those ants going and coming.

(*e*) I suspect that the original name of this spider has been *Cazapulga* or flea-killer, corrupted in a manner common to the vulgar, into Casampulga.

Besides

Besides the three species already mentioned, there is a singular kind of ant in Michuacan which, perhaps, is to be met with in other provinces. It is larger than the common ant, with a greyish-coloured body and a black head. Upon its hinder parts it carries a little bag, full of a very sweet liquor, which the children are very fond of, and imagine it is a honey made by the ant like that made by the bee, but I rather take it to be eggs. Mr. de la Barrere, in his Natural History of Equinoctial France, takes notice of such ants being found in Cayenne; but those are winged ants, and ours are without wings.

The Nigua or Chegoe, called in other countries *Pique*, is an exceeding small insect, not very unlike a flea, which, in some hot countries is bred in the dust. It fixes upon the feet, and breaking insensibly the cuticle, it nestles betwixt that and the true skin, which also, unless it is immediately taken out, it breaks, and pierces at last to the flesh, multiplying with a rapidity almost incredible. It is seldom discovered until it pierces the true skin, when it causes an intolerable itching. These insects with their astonishing multiplication would soon dispeople those countries, were it less easy to avoid them, or were the inhabitants less dextrous in getting them out before they begin to spread. On the other hand, nature, in order to lessen the evil, has not only denied them wings, but even that conformation of the legs, and those strong muscles which he has given to the flea for leaping. The poor however, who are in some measure doomed to live in the dust, and to a habitual neglect of their persons, suffer these insects sometimes to multiply so far as to make large holes in their flesh, and even to occasion dangerous wounds.

What the Niguas or Chegoes do in houses, is done in the fields by the ticks, of which there are two species or rather classes. The first are common in the new, as well as the old world, which fix in the skins of sheep, horses, and other quadrupeds, and get into their ears, and sometimes into those of men.

The other abounds in the grass of the hot countries, from which it readily gets upon the cloaths, and from these to the skin, upon which it fixes with such force from the particular shape of its feet, that it is very difficult to detach it, and if it is not speedily removed makes a wound like that made by the Nigua or Chegoe. At first it seems



## BOOK I.

nothing more than a small black speck: but afterwards enlarges so quickly, and to such a degree from the blood which it sucks, that in a very short time it becomes as large as a bean, and then takes the colour of lead (*f*).

The celebrated cochineal of Mexico, so well known and so highly esteemed over all the world, for the beauty of the colour which it affords, is an insect peculiar to that country, and the most useful of all that the land of Anahuac produces. There particular pains have always been taken to rear it from the times of the Mexican kings (*g*); but the country in which it thrives the best is that of Mizteca, where it is the principal branch of commerce of that place (*b*). In the sixteenth century they used to rear it also in Tlascala, Huexotzinco, and other places, and it was a considerable article of trade; but the Indians (who have always been the persons employed in that business), oppressed by the avaricious tyranny of some Spanish governors, were forced to abandon that employment which, of its own nature besides, was always very troublesome and tedious. The cochineal at its utmost growth, in size and figure resembles a bug. The female is ill proportioned and sluggish. The eyes, mouth, antennæ, and feet, are so concealed among the wrinkles of its skin, that they cannot be discovered without the assistance of a microscope: and it is owing to that circumstance, that some Europeans have been so positive in affirming it to be a kind of seed and not an animal, in opposition to the testimony of the Indians who reared it, and of Hernandez who examined it as a

(*f*) Oviedo says, that the best and safest method of separating it speedily, is to anoint the part with oil, and then to scrape it with a knife.

(*g*) The historian Herrera, in the Dec. IV. lib. viii. cap. 8. says, that although the Indians had the cochineal, yet they knew nothing of its virtues till they were instructed by the Spaniards. But what did the Spaniards teach them? To rear the cochineal? How were they fitted to teach what they were ignorant of themselves, while they took that to be a seed which is in reality an insect. They taught the Indians perhaps, to use it as a dye; but unless the Indians used it as a dye, to what purpose did they take so much pains in rearing it? Why were Huaxyacac, Coyolopan, and several other places obliged to pay twenty bags of cochineal yearly to the king of Mexico, as appears by the register of taxes? Is it possible to imagine, that a people so given to painting even as they were, and who were besides well acquainted with the use of the Achioté, the indigo, and of a great many mineral earths and stones, should be ignorant of the use of the cochineal?

(*b*) Several authors have reckoned that more than 2,500 bags of cochineal are sent every year from Mizteca to Spain. The trade in that article carried on by the city of Oaxaca, brings in 200,000 crowns a-year. Bomare says, there is a kind of cochineal called *Messecan*, because it is got in Metequé, in the province of Honduras: but this is a mistake, for it comes from Milteca, a province farther from Honduras than Rome is from Paris.

naturalist.

naturalist. The males are not so numerous, and one serves for three hundred females : they are likewise smaller and thinner than the females, but more brisk and active. Upon the heads of this insect are two articulated antennæ, in each articulation of which are four small bristles regularly disposed. It has six feet, each consisting of three parts. From the hinder part of the body grow out two hairs, which are two or three times as large as the whole insect. The male has two large wings, which are wanting in the female. These wings are strengthened by two muscles ; one external, extending along the circumference of the wing ; the other internal, which runs parallel to the former. The internal colour of this insect is a deep red, but darker in the female ; and the external colour a pale red. In the wild cochineal the internal colour is still darker, and the external whitish or ash-coloured. The cochineal is reared upon a species of *Nopal*, or *Opuntia*, or Indian fig, which grows to the height of about eight feet, and bears a fruit like the figs of other *Opuntias*, but not eatable. It feeds upon the leaves of that tree, by sucking the juice with a trunk situated in the thorax betwixt the two fore feet : there it passes through all the stages of its growth, and at length produces a numerous offspring. The manner of multiplying peculiar to these valuable insects, the management of the Indians in rearing them, together with the means employed to defend them from rain, which is so hurtful to them, and from many enemies which persecute them, shall be explained when we come to speak of the agriculture of the Mexicans (i).

Among the water insects, the *Atetepitz* is a marsh beetle resembling in shape and size the beetles that fly. It has four feet, and is covered with a hard shell. The *Atopinan* is a marsh grasshopper, of a dark colour, about six inches long and two broad. The *Abuibuitla* is a worm of the Mexican lake, four inches long, and of the thickness

(i) D. Ant. Ulloa says, that the *Nopal*, upon which the cochineal is reared, has no prickles ; but in Misteca, where I was for five years, I always saw it upon prickly-nopals. Mr. de Raynal imagines, that the colour of the cochineal is to be ascribed to the red fig upon which it lives ; but that author has been misinformed ; for neither does the cochineal feed upon the fruit, but only upon the leaf, which is perfectly green ; nor does that nopal bear red but white figs. It is true, it may be reared upon the species with a red fig, but that is not the proper plant of the cochineal.



## BOOK I.

of a goose-quill; of a tawny colour upon the upper part of the body, and white upon the under part. It stings with its tail, which is hard and poisonous. The *Ocuiliztac* is a black marsh-worm, which becomes white on being roasted. All these insects were eaten by the ancient Mexicans.

Lastly, to omit other insects the very names of which would fill an immense catalogue, I shall conclude this account with a kind of zoophytes, or animal plants, which I saw in the year 1751, in a house in the country, about ten miles from Angelopoli, towards the south-east. These were three or four inches long, and had four very slender feet, and two antennæ; but their body was nothing more than the fibres of the leaves, of the same shape, size, and colour with those of the other leaves of the trees upon which these insects were found. Hernandez mentions them by the name of *Quauhmecatl*; and Gemelli describes another somewhat similar which was found in the neighbourhood of Manila (*k*).

The slight account we have already given of the natural history of Anahuac, may serve to shew the differences that take place in the hot, the cold, and the temperate countries, of which that vast kingdom is composed. Nature in the hot countries is more profuse, and in the cold and temperate, more mild. In the former, the hills abound more in minerals and springs, the valleys are more delightful, and the woods are thicker. There we meet with plants more useful for the support of life (*l*). Trees of larger growth, more valuable woods, more beautiful flowers, more delicious fruits, and more aromatic gums. There too the animals are more numerous and of greater variety, and the individuals of the different species of greater beauty and size; the birds have a finer plumage and a sweeter song: but all these advan-

(*k*) I am aware that modern naturalists seldom apply the name of *zoophytes*, unless to certain marine bodies, which, with the appearance of vegetables, are really of the nature of animals; but I give it to those terrestrial insects, because it seems with as much, if not more propriety applicable to them than to the marine bodies. In my Natural Philosophy, I think I have given a very probable explanation of the operation of nature in the production of such insects.

(*l*) It is true, that generally neither corn grows there, nor many of the European fruits, such as apples, peaches, pears, &c. yet what signifies the want of a few of those vegetables, compared with the unspeakable profusion and variety of plants serving both for food and medicine, which are to be found in those countries?

tages are counterbalanced by equal inconveniencies; for there the beasts of prey are more terrible, the reptiles more poisonous, and the insects more pernicious. The earth there never feels the effects of winter, nor is the atmosphere subjected to a hurtful vicissitude of seasons. A perpetual spring reigns upon the earth, and a perpetual summer in the air. The inhabitants are used to that excessive heat, but from the constant sweating which it occasions, together with the use of those exquisite fruits which the bountiful earth presents to them in such abundance, they are often affected with disorders unknown in other climates. The cold countries are neither so fruitful nor so beautiful, but on the other hand they are more favourable to health, and the animals are less hurtful to man. In the temperate countries (at least in many of them, and particularly in the vale of Mexico), are enjoyed the advantages of the cold, and many of the pleasures of the hot climates without the inconveniencies of either. The most common diseases of the hot countries are intermittent fevers, spasms, and consumptions; and in the port of Vera Cruz, within these few years, the black vomiting (*m*): in other parts, catarrhs, fluxes, pleurifies, and acute fevers; and in the capital, the diarrhœa. Besides these more frequent diseases, certain epidemical disorders arise at times, which seem in some degree periodical, although not with much exactness or regularity, such as those which appeared in 1546, 1576, 1736, and 1762. The small-pox brought thither by the Spanish conquerors, is not seen so frequently in that country as in Europe; but generally appears after an interval of a certain number of years, and then attacking all those who had not been affected by it before, it makes as much havoc at one time as it does successively in Europe.

The nations which possessed those countries before the Spaniards, although differing in language, and partly also in manners, were yet nearly of the same character. The moral and physical qualities of the Mexicans, their tempers and dispositions were the same with those of the Acolhuicans, the Tepanceans, the Tlascallans, and other nations, with no other difference than what arose from their different mode of education; so that what we shall say of the one, we should wish to

SECT. XV.  
Characters  
of the Mexi-  
cans and o-  
ther nations  
of Anahuac.

(*m*) Ulloa, and other historians of America, describe the spasms and the black vomiting. The latter disease was not known in that country before the year 1726.



## BOOK I.

be understood as equally applicable to the rest. Several authors, ancient as well as modern, have undertaken a description of these people, but I have not met with any one which is, in every respect, faithful and correct. The passions and prejudices of some, and the imperfect information, or the weak understandings of others, have prevented their representing them in their genuine colours. What we shall say upon the subject, is derived from a serious and long study of the history of these nations, from a familiar intercourse for many years with the natives, and from the most minute observations with respect to their present state, made both by ourselves and by other impartial persons. I certainly have no bias upon my own mind which should make me lean to one side more than to the other; as neither the feelings of a fellow-countryman can sway my opinion in their favour, nor can I be interested to condemn them from a love of my nation, or zeal for the honour of my countrymen: so that I shall speak frankly and plainly the good and the bad, which I have discovered in them.

The Mexicans are of a good stature, generally rather exceeding than falling short of the middle size, and well proportioned in all their limbs: they have good complexions, narrow foreheads, black eyes, clean, firm, regular white teeth, thick, black, coarse, glossy hair, thin beards, and generally no hair upon their legs, thighs, and arms. Their skin is of an olive colour.

There is scarcely a nation, perhaps, upon earth in which there are fewer persons deformed, and it would be more difficult to find a single hump-backed, lame, or squint-eyed man amongst a thousand Mexicans, than among any hundred of any other nation. The unpleasantness of their colour, the smallness of their forehead, the thinness of their beard, and the coarseness of their hair, are so far compensated by the regularity and fine proportions of their limbs, that they can neither be called very beautiful, nor the contrary, but seem to hold a middle-place between the extremes. Their appearance neither engages nor disgusts; but among the young women of Mexico, there are many very beautiful and fair; whose beauty is at the same time rendered more winning by the sweetness of their manner of speaking, and by the pleasantness and natural modesty of their whole behaviour.

Their senses are very acute, especially that of sight, which they enjoy unimpaired to the greatest age. Their constitutions are sound, and their health robust. They are entirely free of many disorders which are common among the Spaniards, but of the epidemical diseases to which their country is occasionally subject, they are the principal victims; with them these diseases begin, and with them they end. One never perceives in a Mexican that stinking breath which is occasioned in other people by the corruption of the humours or indigestion. Their constitutions are phlegmatic; but the pituitous evacuations from their heads are very scanty, and they seldom spit. They become grey-headed and bald earlier than the Spaniards, and although most of them die of acute diseases, it is not very uncommon among them to attain the age of a hundred.

They are now, and have ever been very moderate in eating, but their passion for strong liquors is carried to the greatest excess. Formerly they were kept within bounds by the severity of the laws; but now that these liquors are grown so common, and drunkenness is unpunished, one half of the people seem to have lost their senses; and this, together with the poor manner in which they live, exposed to all the baneful impressions of disease, and destitute of the means of correcting them, is undoubtedly the principal cause of the havoc which is made among them by epidemical disorders.

Their minds are at bottom in every respect like those of the other children of Adam, and endued with the same powers; nor did the Europeans ever do less credit to their own reason than when they doubted of the rationality of the Americans. The state of civilization among the Mexicans, when they were first known to the Spaniards, which was much superior to that of the Spaniards themselves, when they were first known to the Phœnicians, that of the Gauls when first known to the Greeks, or that of the Germans and Britons when first known to the Romans (*n*), should of itself have been fully sufficient  
to

(*n*) D. Bernardo Aldrete, in his book upon the Origin of the Spanish Tongue, would have us to believe that the Spaniards were less rude at the arrival of the Phœnicians, than the Mexicans were at the time of the arrival of the Spaniards; but this paradox has been sufficiently refuted by the learned authors of the Literary History of Spain. It is true, that the Spaniards in those remote ages were not so barbarous as the Chichimecans, the Californians, and some other savage nations of America; but neither their government was so regular, nor their  
arts



BOOK I.

to correct such an error of man's mind, if it had not been the interest of the inhuman avarice of some ruffians to encourage it (*o*). Their understandings are fitted for every kind of science, as experience has actually shewn (*p*). Of the Mexicans who have had an opportunity of engaging in the pursuits of learning, which is but a small number, as the greatest part of the people are always employed in the public or private works, we have known some good mathematicians, excellent architects, and learned divines.

Many persons allow the Mexicans to possess a great talent of imitation, but deny them the praise of invention: a vulgar error, which is contradicted by the ancient history of that people.

Their minds are affected by the same variety of passions with those of other nations, but not to an equal degree. The Mexicans seldom exhibit those transports of anger, or those frenzies of love which are so common in other countries.

They are slow in their motions, and shew a wonderful tenacity and steadiness in those works which require time and long continued attention. They are most patient of injury and hardship; and where they suspect no evil intention, are most grateful for any kindness shewn; but some Spaniards, who cannot distinguish patience from insensibility, nor distrust from ingratitude, say proverbially, that the Indians are alike insensible to injuries and to benefits (*q*). That habitual distrust which they entertain of all who are not of their own nation, prompts them often to lie and betray; so that good faith certainly has not been so much respected among them as it deserves.

arts so much improved, nor, as far as we can judge, had they made so much progress in the knowledge of nature, as the Mexicans at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

(*o*) Upon this subject I must refer the reader to the bitter complaints made by the bishop Garcès, in his letter to pope Paul III. and by the bishop of las Casas, in his Memorials to the Catholic kings Charles V. and Philip II. but especially to the very humane laws made by those most Christian monarchs, in favour of the Indians.

(*p*) We shall, in the Dissertations, produce the opinions of D. Giulian Garcès, first bishop of Tlascalla; of D. John di Zumarraga, first bishop of Mexico, and of D. Bartholomew de las Casas, first bishop of Chiapa, with respect to the capacities, understandings, and other good qualities of the Mexicans. The testimony of those virtuous and learned prelates, who had so much intercourse with the Indians, weighs much more than that of any historian whatever.

(*q*) Experience has proved the grateful dispositions of the Mexicans, wherever they were assured of the good-will and sincerity of their benefactors. Their gratitude has been often manifested by open and loud demonstrations of joy, which publicly declare the falshood of the Spanish proverb.

They

They are by nature taciturn, serious, and austere, and shew more anxiety to punish crimes than to reward virtues. BOOK I.

Generosity and perfect disinterestedness are the principal features of their character. Gold with the Mexicans has not that value which it enjoys elsewhere (*r*). They seem to give without reluctance what has cost them the utmost labour to acquire. The neglect of selfish interests, together with the dislike which they bear to their rulers, and consequently their aversion to the tasks imposed by them, seem to have been the only grounds of that much exaggerated indolence with which the Americans have been charged (*s*); and after all, there is no set of people in that country who labour more, nor whose labours are more useful or more necessary (*t*).

The respect paid by children to their parents, and by the young to the old, among those people, seem to be feelings that are born with them. Parents are very fond of their children; but the affection which husbands bear to their wives, is certainly less than that borne by the wives to their husbands; and it is very common for the men to love their neighbours wives better than their own.

Courage and cowardice seem alternately so to affect their minds, that it is often difficult to determine whether the one or the other predominates. They meet dangers with intrepidity when they proceed from natural causes, but they are easily terrified by the stern look of a Spaniard. That stupid indifference about death and eternity, which many authors have thought inherent in the character of every American, is peculiar only to those who are yet so rude and uninformed as to have no idea of a future state.

Their singular attachment to the external ceremonies of religion is very apt to degenerate into superstition, as happens with the ignorant of all nations of the world; but their proneness to idolatry is nothing

(*r*) I do not speak of those Mexicans, who, by a constant intercourse with covetous nations, have been infected by their avarice; although, at the same time, even those appear to be less selfish than the generality of persons of that disposition.

(*s*) What we observe upon the subject of American indolence is not meant to apply to the savage nations in other parts of the new world.

(*t*) In our Dissertations we shall give an account of the works in which the Mexicans are employed. Monsign. Palafox used to say, that if ever the Indians failed them, the Spaniards would find the Indies fail also.



## BOOK I.

more than a chimera formed in the absurd imaginations of misinformed persons. The instances of a few mountaineers are not sufficient to justify a general aspersions upon the whole people (*u*).

To conclude, the character of the Mexicans, like that of every other nation, is a mixture of good and bad; but the bad is easy to be corrected by a proper education, as has been frequently demonstrated by experience (*x*). It would be difficult to find, any where, a youth more docile than the present, or a body of people more ready than their ancestors were to receive the lights of religion.

I must add, that the modern Mexicans are not in all respects similar to the ancient; as the Greeks of these days have little resemblance of those who lived in the times of Plato and of Pericles. The ancient Mexicans shewed more fire, and were more sensible to the impressions of honour. They were more intrepid, more nimble, more active, more industrious; but they were, at the same time, more superstitious and cruel.

(*u*) The few examples that are to be found of idolatry are not altogether inexcusable, when we consider how naturally rude and unenlightened men may confound the idolatrous worship of some unshapely figure of stone or wood, with that which is due to the sacred images alone. And our own prejudices against them have often been the cause of our treating as idols what were really the images, though rude ones, of the saints. In the year 1754, I saw some little images which had been found in a cave in a mountain, and were considered as idols, but which I had no doubt were actually images representing the mystery of the sacred nativity.

(*x*) To be sensible of the influence of education upon the Mexicans, we need only to be made acquainted with the wonderful life led by the Mexican women of the Royal College of Guadaloupe in Mexico, and those of the monasteries of Capuchins in the same capital, and Valladolid in Michuacan.

## B O O K II.

*Of the Toltecas, Chechemecas, Acolhuas, Olmecas, and other Nations that inhabited the Country of Anahuac before the Mexicans. The Expedition of the Aztecas, or Mexicans, from their Native Country of Aztlan. The Events of their Journey into the Country of Anahuac; and their Settlements in Chapoltepec and Colhuacan. The Foundation of Mexico and Tlaltelolco. Inhuman Sacrifice of a Colhuan Girl.*

THE history of the first peopling of Anahuac is so involved in fable, like that of other nations, that it is not merely difficult but altogether impossible to discover the truth. It is certain, however, both from the testimony of the sacred writings, and from the constant and universal tradition of those nations, that the inhabitants of Anahuac are descended of those few mortals whom the Divine Providence saved from the waters of the deluge, in order to preserve the race of man, upon earth. At the same time there cannot be a doubt, that the men who first peopled that country, came originally from the more northern parts of America, where their ancestors had been settled for many ages. All the historians, Toltecan, Chechemecan, Acolhuan, Mexican, and Tlascalan, are agreed upon these two points: but who those first inhabitants were, the time of their emigration, the events of their journey, and their first establishments, are entirely unknown. Several authors have endeavoured to pierce that chaos; but trusting to slight conjectures, fanciful combinations, and certain pictures of very ambiguous authenticity; and having recourse in their difficulties, to puerile and romantic narrations, have utterly lost themselves in the thick darkness of antiquity.

There have been writers, who, building upon the tradition of the natives, and upon the discovery of bones, skulls, and entire skeletons of prodigious size, which have been dug up, at different times,

BOOK II.  
SECT. I.  
Of the Toltecas.



## BOOK II.

in many parts of New Spain (*a*), have imagined that the first inhabitants of that country were Giants. I, for my own part, have no doubt of their existence there, as well as in other parts of the New World (*b*); but we can neither form any conjecture as to the time in which they lived, although we have reason to believe they must be very ancient; nor can we be persuaded that there has ever been, as those writers imagined, a whole nation of Giants, but only single individuals of the nations which we now know, or of some others more ancient and unknown (*c*).

The Toltecas are the oldest nation of which we have any knowledge, and that is very imperfect. Being banished, as they tell us, from their own country *Huebuetafallan*, which we take to have been in the kingdom of *Tollan* (*d*), from which they derived their name, and situated to the north-west of Mexico, they began their journey in the year 1. *Tecpatl*, that is in the 596 of our era. In every place to which they came, they remained no longer than they liked

(*a*) The places where gigantic skeletons have been found, are *Atlancatepec*, a village in the province of Tlascala, *Texcuco*, *Toluca*, *Quauhxicmalpan*; and in our days, upon a hill in California, not far from Kada-Kaaman.

(*b*) I am well aware that many European philosophers, who laugh at the belief of giants, will be ready to ridicule me, or at least to pity my credulity; but I will not betray the truth to avoid censure. I know that among the civilized nations of America, it was a current tradition, that a race of men had existed, in former times, of extraordinary height and bulk; but I cannot remember an instance among any American nation, of there having ever been any elephants, hippopotamuses, or other quadrupeds of uncommon size. I know from the testimony of innumerable writers, and particularly of two eye-witnesses, of unquestionable credit, Hernandez, and D' Acosta, who were men of learning, correctness, and veracity, that human skulls have been found, and even whole skeletons, of astonishing size; but I do not know, that in any of the vast number of openings which have been made in the earth in New Spain, any skeleton of a hippopotamus has been found, or even a single tooth of an elephant. I know, lastly, that some of the great bones above mentioned, have been found in tombs, which appear evidently to have been made on purpose; but I am yet to learn of tombs ever having been constructed for sea-horses and elephants. All this and more ought to be weighed, before we presume to determine with some authors who have asserted it, without the least hesitation, that all the large bones discovered in America, belonged to those, or some other such great animals.

(*c*) Many historians of Mexico say, that the giants were betrayed, and put to death by the Tlascalans; but this idea, which has no foundation but in some poems of the Tlascalans, is inconsistent with the chronology adopted by those historians themselves; making the giants much too ancient, and the Tlascalans too modern, in the country of Anahuac.

(*d*) *Toltecotl*, in Mexican signifies a native of Tollan, as *Tlascaltecatl* does a native of Tlascala, &c.

it,

it, or were easily accommodated with provisions. When they determined to make a longer stay, they erected houses, and sowed the land with corn, cotton, and other plants, the seeds of which they had carried along with them to supply their necessities. In this wandering manner did they travel, always southward, for the space of one hundred and four years, till they arrived at a place, to which they gave the name of *Tollantzinco*, about fifty miles to the east of that spot where, some centuries after, was founded the famous city of Mexico. They were led and commanded, upon the whole journey, by certain captains or lords, who were reduced to seven, by the time they arrived at *Tollantzinco* (*e*). They did not chuse, however, to settle in that country, although the climate is mild, and the soil fruitful; but in less than twenty years after, they went about forty miles towards the west, where, along the banks of a river, they founded the city of *Tollan* or *Tula*, after the name of their native country. That city, the oldest, as far as we know, in *Anahuac*, is one of the most celebrated in the history of Mexico, and was the capital of the *Toltecan* kingdom, and the court of their kings. Their monarchy began in the year 8. *Acatl*, that is in the year 607 of the Christian era, and lasted three hundred and eighty-four years. I have subjoined the series of their kings with the year of the Christian era in which they began to reign (*f*).

<i>Chalchiutlanetzin</i> ,	in the	667
<i>Ixtlilcuechahuac</i> ,	in the	719
<i>Huetzin</i> ,	in the	771
<i>Totepeub</i> ,	in the	823
<i>Nacaxoc</i> ,	in the	875
<i>Mitl</i> ,	in the	927
<i>Xiutzaltzin</i> , Queen,	in the	979
<i>Topiltzin</i> ,	in the	1031.

It might appear extraordinary that just eight monarchs should reign in the course of four centuries, if it were not explained by a singular

(*e*) The seven *Toltecan* leaders were, *Zacatl*, *Chalcatzin*, *Ebecatzin*, *Cobuatzon*, *Tzihuacoatl*, *Metzotzin*, and *Tlapalmetzotzin*.

(*f*) We have pointed out the year in which the *Toltecan* monarchs began their reigns, by taking for granted the epoch of their leaving *Huehuetlapallan*, which however, is very uncertain.



## BOOK II.

law of that people, according to which, no king was suffered to reign either longer or shorter than a Toltecan age; which, as we shall mention in another place, consisted of fifty-two years. If a king completed the age, upon the throne, he immediately resigned the government, and another was put in his place: and if the king happened to die before the age was expired, the nobles assumed the administration, and, in the name of the deceased king, governed the kingdom for the remaining years of the age. This was the case with the Queen Xiutzaltzin, after whose death in the fifth year of her reign, the nobles held the government for the forty-eight years which succeeded.

SECT. II.  
The great civilization of the Toltecas.

The Toltecas were the most celebrated people of Anahuac, for their superior civilization, and skill in the arts; whence, in after ages, it has been common to distinguish the most remarkable artists, in an honourable manner, by the appellation of Toltecas. They always lived in society, collected into cities, under the government of kings, and regular laws. They were not very warlike, and less turned to the exercise of arms than to the cultivation of the arts. The nations that have succeeded them, have acknowledged themselves indebted to the Toltecas for their knowledge of the culture of grain, cotton, pepper, and other most useful fruits. Nor did they only practise those arts which are dictated by necessity, but those also which minister to luxury. They had the art of casting gold and silver, and melting them in whatever forms they pleased, and acquired the greatest reputation from the cutting of all kinds of gems: but nothing, to us, raises their character so high as their having been the inventors, or at least the reformers of that system of the arrangement of time, which was adopted by all the civilized nations of Anahuac; and which, as we shall see afterwards, implies numerous observations, and a wonderfully correct astronomy.

Cav. Boturini (*g*), upon the faith of the ancient histories of the Toltecas, says, that observing in their own country of *Huebuetlapallan*, how the solar year exceeded the civil one by which they

(*g*) In a work of his, printed at Madrid, in 1746, under the title of, *Sketch of a general History of New Spain, founded upon a great Number of Figures, Symbols, Characters, Hieroglyphics, Hymns, and Manuscripts of Indian Authors, lately discovered.*

reckoned,

reckoned, about six hours, they regulated it by interposing the intercalary day once in the four years; which they did, more than one hundred years before the Christian era. He says besides, that in the year 660, under the reign of *Ixtlalcuechahuac*, in Tula, a celebrated astronomer called *Huematzin*, assembled, by the king's consent, all the wise men of the nation; and with them painted that famous book called *Teoamoxtli* or Divine Book, in which were represented, in very plain figures, the origin of the Indians, their dispersion after the confusion of tongues at Babel, their journey in Asia, their first settlements upon the Continent of America, the founding of the kingdom of Tula, and their progress till that time. There were described the heavens, the planets, the constellations, the Toltecan calendar with its cycles, the mythological transformations, in which were included their moral philosophy, and the mysteries of their deities concealed by hieroglyphics from common understandings, together with all that appertained to their religion and manners. The above mentioned author adds, that that eclipse of the sun which happened at the death of our Saviour, was marked in their paintings, in the year 7. *Tochtli* (b); and that some learned Spaniards, well acquainted with the history and the paintings of the Toltecas, having compared their chronology with ours, found that they reckoned from the creation of the world to the birth of Christ, five thousand one hundred and ninety-nine years, which is exactly the computation of the Roman calendar.

Whatever may be in these things mentioned by Boturini, upon which I leave the prudent reader to form his own judgment, there cannot be a doubt, with those who have studied the history of that people, that the Toltecas had a clear and distinct knowledge of the universal deluge, of the confusion of tongues, and of the dispersion of the people; and even pretended to give the names of their first ancestors who were divided from the rest of the families upon that

(b) All those who have studied carefully the history of the nations of Anahuac, know very well that those people were accustomed to mark eclipses, comets, and other phenomena of the heavens, in their paintings. Upon reading Boturini I set about comparing the Toltecan years with ours, and I found the 34th year of Christ, or 30th of our era, to be the 7. *Tochtli*: but I did this merely to satisfy my own curiosity, and I do not mean either to confirm or give credit to the things told us by that author.



## BOOK II.

universal dispersion. It is equally certain, as we shall shew in another place, however incredible it may appear to the critics of Europe, who are accustomed to look upon the Americans as all equally barbarous, that the Mexicans and all the other civilized nations of Anahuac regulated their civil year according to the solar, by means of the intercalary days, in the same manner as the Romans did after the Julian arrangement; and that this accuracy was owing to the skill of the Toltecas. Their religion was idolatrous, and they appear by their history to have been the inventors of the greatest part of the mythology of the Mexicans, but we do not know that they practised those barbarous and bloody sacrifices which became afterwards so common among the other nations.

The Tezcucan historians believed the Toltecas the authors of that famous idol, representing the god of water, placed on mount *Tlaloc*, of which we shall speak hereafter. It is certain that they built in honour of their beloved god *Quetzalcoatl*, the highest pyramid of Cholula, and probably also these famous ones of Teotihuacan in honour of the sun and moon, which are still in existence, though much disfigured (*i*). Boturini believed the Toltecas built the pyramid of Cholula, to counterfeit the tower of Babel; but the painting on which his error is supported (sufficiently common with the vulgar of New Spain), is the work of a modern and ignorant Cholulan, the whole of it being a heap of absurdities (*k*).

(*i*) Betancourt says these pyramids were built by the Mexicans; this is certainly false, and contrary to the opinion of all other authors, American as well as Spanish. Dr. Seguenza appears to think they were the work of the Olmecas; but as we have no other remains of the architecture of that nation, by which we might judge; and besides, these pyramids being made after the model of that of Cholula, we are therefore induced to think that the Toltecas were the architects of them all, as Torquemada and other authors relate.

(*k*) The painting alluded to by Boturini, represented the pyramid of Cholula, with this Mexican inscription, *Toltecatl Chalchibuatl onazla Ebecatepetl*; which he thus interprets: *A monument, or precious stone of the Tolteca nation, whose neck searches into the region of the air*; but independent of the incorrectness of the writing, and the barbarism Chalchihuatl, whoever is in the least instructed in the Mexican language, will immediately perceive there could not be a more whimsical interpretation. At the foot of the picture, says Boturini, the author put a note, in which, addressing himself to his countrymen, he admonished them as follows: Nobles, and gentlemen, behold your scriptures, the image of your antiquity, and the history of your ancestors; who, moved by fear from the deluge, built this asylum, for a ready retreat, in case of being again visited by such a calamity. But to speak the truth, the Toltecas must have been utterly deprived of understanding, if from the fear of the deluge

During the four centuries which the monarchy of the Toltecas lasted, they multiplied considerably, extending their population every way in numerous and large cities; but the direful calamities which happened to them in the first years of the reign of Topiltzin, gave a fatal shock to their prosperity and power. For several years heaven denied them the necessary showers to their fields, and the earth the fruits which supported them. The air, infected with mortal contagion, filled daily the graves with the dead, and the minds of those surviving with consternation, at the destruction of their countrymen. A great part of the nation died by famine and sickness. Topiltzin departed life in the second year *Tecpatl*, the twentieth of his reign, which was probably the year 1052 of the vulgar era, and with him the Toltecan monarchy concluded. The wretched remains of the nation, willing to save themselves from the common calamity, sought timely relief to their misfortunes, in other countries. Some directed their course to Onohualco or Yucatan, some to Guatemala, while some families stopped in the kingdom of Tula, and scattered themselves in the great vale where Mexico was afterwards founded; some in Cholula, Tlaximoloyan, and other places; and amongst these were the two princes sons of king Topiltzin, whose descendants, in course of time, intermarried with the royal families of Mexico, Tezcucó, and Colhuacan.

These imperfect accounts of the Toltecas are all that we think proper to be told here, omitting many fabulous relations introduced

deluge they had undertaken, at so much expence and labour, the building of that ominous pyramid, while in the highest mountains, a little distant from Cholula, they had a much more secure asylum from inundations, with less danger of perishing by want. In the same work, Boturini says, was represented the baptism of Ilamateuctli, Queen of Cholula, conferred upon her by Deacon Aguilar, the 2d of August, 1521, together with the apparition of the Virgin to a certain religious Franciscan, who was living at Rome, ordering him to depart for Mexico; where he was to place on a mountain built by art (that is, the pyramid of Cholula), her image. But this is no more than a string of dreams and lies; for in Cholula there never were either kings, nor could such baptism, of which no author says a word, have been celebrated on the 6th of August, 1521; as at that time Aguilar, with the other Spaniards, was in the heat of the siege of the capital, which was to render itself up, seven days after, to the conquerors. Of the pretended apparition of the mother of God, there is no memory among the Franciscan historians, who never omitted any thing of this kind in their chronicles. We have demonstrated the falsity of this relation, to caution those, with regard to modern pictures, who may in future undertake the history of Mexico.



BOOK II. by other historians (*l*). We would require to have the *Divine Book*, cited by Boturini, and by Sig. D. Ferdinand d'Alba Ixtlilxohitl in his most valuable manuscripts to throw greater light on the history of this celebrated nation.

After the destruction of the Toltecas, for the space of one century, the land of Anahuac remained solitary, and almost entirely depopulated, until the arrival of the Chechemecas (*m*).

The Chechemecas, like the Toltecas who preceded them, and other nations which came after them, were originally from the northern countries, as we may call the North of America, like the North of Europe, the seminary of the human race. From both, in swarms, have issued numerous nations to people the countries in the South. their native country, of the situation of which we are ignorant, was called *Amaquemecan*, where, according to their account, different monarchs ruled their nation for many years (*n*). The character of the Chechemecas, as is shewn by their history, was very singular, as a certain degree of civilization was blended with many traits of barbarism. They lived under the command of a sovereign, and the chiefs and governors deputed by him, with as much submission as is usual among the most cultivated nations. There were distinctions between the nobility and commonalty, and the plebeians were accustomed to reverence those whose birth, merit, or favour with the

(*l*) Torquemada says, that at a certain festival-ball made by the Toltecas, the sad-looking devil appeared to them in a gigantic size, with immense arms, and in the midst of the entertainment he embraced and suffocated them; that then he appeared in the figure of a child with a putrid head, and brought the plague; and finally, at the persuasion of the same devil they abandoned the country of Tula. But this good author understood these symbolical figures literally; whereas they were meant only to represent the famine and pestilence which had befallen them, at the time when they were in the height of their prosperity.

(*m*) In our second dissertation, we differ from Torquemada, who does not allow more than eleven years of interval between the destruction of the Toltecas and the arrival of the Chechemecas.

(*n*) Torquemada names these Chechemecan kings of Amaquemecan, and to the first he gives one hundred and eighty years of reign; to the second, one hundred and fifty-six; and to the third, one hundred and thirty-three. See our second dissertation on the absurd chronology of this author. He also confidently affirms, that Amaquemecan was six hundred miles distant from the spot where the city of Guadalajara is at present, but in more than one thousand two hundred miles of inhabited country beyond that city, there is not the least trace or memory of the kingdom of Amaquemecan; from whence we believe it to be a country still undiscovered, and greatly farther to the northward than Torquemada imagined.

princ

prince raised them above the other ranks. They dwelt in communities together, in places composed, as we may imagine, of poor huts (o); but they neither practised agriculture, nor those arts which accompany civil life. They lived only on game, and fruits, and roots which the earth spontaneously produced. Their clothing was the rough skins of the wild beasts they took in prey, and their arms no other than the bow and arrow. Their religion was reduced to the simple worship of the sun, to which pretended divinity they offered herbs and flowers which they found springing in the fields. With respect to their customs, they were certainly less displeasing and less rude than those to which the genius of a nation of hunters gives birth.

Their motive for leaving their native country, is uncertain; as likewise the etymology of the word *Chechemecatl* (o). The last king whom they had in Amaquemecan, left his government divided between his two sons Achcauhtli and Xolotl; the latter either not brooking, as frequently happens, the division of regal authority, was willing to prove whether fortune destined him other territories, where he could govern without a rival; or perceiving that the mountains of his kingdom were not sufficient to provide support for the then probably increased number of inhabitants, determined to ease necessity by a timely departure. Having taken, therefore, such resolution from the one or other motive, and having first got intelligence, by his emissaries of a good situation in the southern countries, he set out from his native land, with a large army of his subjects, who were disposed, from affection or interest, to accompany him. In their travels they encountered with the ruins of the Toltecan settlements, and in particular of the great city of Tula, where they arrived at the end of eighteen months. From this they proceeded towards Chem-

SECT. IV.  
Xolotl, first  
king of the  
Chechemecas, in Anahuac.

(o) Torquemada says, that the Chechemecas had no houses, but dwelt in the caverns of mountains; but in the same chapter where he says this, he affirms that *the capital city* of their kingdom was called Amaquemecan.

(o) Several authors have laboured to guess at the etymology of the word *Chechemecatl*. Torquemada says, that this name is derived from *Techichinani*, which signifies *sucking*, because the Chechemecas sucked the blood of the animals which they hunted. But this is a forced etymology, particularly among those nations, who did not alter derivative names in such a manner. Betancourt believed it to be derived from *Chichimi*, that is, dogs beans. They were so called by other nations, in contempt; but had this been the case, they would not have boasted, as they did, of the name Chechemecatl.



BOOK II. poalla and Tepepolco, forty miles distant, towards the north, from the site of Mexico. From thence Xolotl sent the prince Nopaltzin, his son, to survey the country. The prince crossed the borders of the lakes, the mountains which surround the delightful vale of Mexico, and having marked the whole country, from the top of a lofty mountain, he shot four arrows to the four winds in token of taking possession, in the name of his father, of all that country. Xolotl being made acquainted with the quality of the country, resolved to establish himself in Tenayuca, a place six miles distant from the site of Mexico towards the north, and distributed his people among the neighbouring lands : but the greater population being towards the north, and north-west, that tract of land had since the name of Chechemecatalli, that is, the land of the Chechemecas. Historians relate, that in Tenayuca there was a review of the people taken, and therefore it was likewise given the name of *Nepohualco*, which means, the place of enumeration ; but what Torquemada adds, is entirely incredible, that there were more than a million of Chechemecas found at this review, and there remained even until his time, twelve piles of the stones which they continued to throw during the review. Besides, neither is it probable that so large an army should set out on so long an expedition ; or does it appear possible that so small a district could support a million of hunters.

The king being settled in Tenayuca, which he destined for the place of his court, and having given proper orders for the forming of other towns and villages, he commanded one of his captains, named Achitomatl, to go and trace the source of certain rivers which the prince had observed in his expedition. Achitomatl found in Chapultepec, in Cojohuacan, and in other places, several Toltecan families, from whom he learned the cause and time of their desolation. The Chechemecas, not only avoided to disturb those miserable relics of that celebrated nation, but formed alliances with them, many of the nobles marrying with the women of Tolteca ; and among others, prince Nopaltzin married Azcaxochitl, a virgin descended from Pochotl, one of the two princes of the royal family of Tolteca, who survived the destruction of their nation. This humanity brought its recompence to the Chechemecas ; for from their commerce with  
that

that industrious nation, they began to taste corn, and other fruits of industry; were taught agriculture, the manner of digging metals, and the art of casting them; also to cut stones, to spin and weave cotton, and other things, by which they improved their means of living, their clothing, their habitations, and manners.

Nor did the arrival of other civilized nations contribute less to the refinement of the Chechemecas. Eight years were scarcely elapsed from the time that Xolotl had established himself in Tenayuca, when there arrived in that country six respectable persons, with a considerable retinue of people. They were from a northern country, neighbouring to the kingdom of Amaquemecan, or a little distant from it, the name of which is not mentioned by historians; but we have reason to believe that it was the country of *Aztlan*, the native country of the Mexicans, and that these new colonies were the six famous tribes of Nahuatlachi, of which all the historians of Mexico make mention, and we shall shortly treat of. It is probable that Xolotl sent advice to his native country, of the advantages of the situation where he was established; and that such information, spread among the adjoining nations, incited many families to follow his steps, and partake his good fortune. It is also to be imagined, that some famine or scarcity having happened to the northern countries, so many people were obliged to seek relief in lands to the southward. However it was, the six persons arrived in Tenayuca from the North, were graciously received by the Chechemecan king; and when he learned the purpose of their travel, and their desire to stay in that country, he assigned them a district which they might inhabit with their people.

A few years after, there arrived three other princes, with a great army of the Acolhuan nation, natives of Teoacoluacan, a country neighbouring to, and not far distant from the kingdom of Amaquemecan. These princes were named *Acolhuatzin*, *Chiconquauhtli*, and *Tzontecomatl*, and were of the most noble house of *Citin*. It was the most cultivated and most civilized of all the nations which were in that country since the Toltecas. It may be easily supposed, how great a rumour was occasioned by such a novelty, in that kingdom, and what disquiet so great a multitude of unknown people raised



## BOOK II.

among the Chechemecas ; nor does it seem probable, that they would have been permitted to enter the kingdom, without having previously given information of their condition, and the motives of their visit. The king was at this time in Tezcuco, where he had removed his court, either being tired of Tenayuca, or allured by the advantageous situation of that new place. Here the three princes arrived, and being presented to the king, after a profound bow, and that ceremony of respect so familiar to these nations of kissing the hand after having touched the earth with it, they addressed him in words to this purpose. “ We are come, mighty king, from the kingdom of Teoacoluacan, a little distance only from your native country : we are all three brothers, and sons of a great lord ; but being acquainted with the happiness which the Chechemecas enjoy under the rule of a prince so humane, we have preferred to the advantages which we had in our native country, the honour of becoming your subjects. We pray you, therefore, to give us place in your happy land, where we may live dependent on your authority and subject to your command.” The Chechemecan sovereign was pleased with the lordly air and courtly manners of these noble youths, but still more with the flattering vanity of seeing humbled, in his presence, three princes allured from such distant countries by the fame of his clemency and his power. He replied with complaisance to their address, and offered to comply with their desires ; but while he was deliberating in what manner he should do it, he ordered his son to lodge them, and take care of their entertainment.

The king had two daughters who were marriageable, whom, from the first he had thought of marrying with the two eldest princes ; but he was unwilling to discover this intention, until he should be acquainted with their disposition, and should be sure of the consent of his subjects. When he was satisfied in mind of both these points, he called the princes to him, who remained anxious about their fate, and opened his resolution to them, not only to grant them establishments in his kingdom, but also to marry two of them with his daughters, lamenting that he had no other, to avoid leaving any one excluded from the new alliance. The princes thanked him with warm expressions of gratitude, and proffered to serve him with the utmost fidelity.

When

When the day appointed for the nuptials arrived, such a concourse of people flocked to Tenayuca, the place destined for the solemnization, the city being unable to receive them, many remained in the country. Acolhuatzin married the eldest of the princesses, named Cuetzlaxochitl, and Chiconquautli the other. The third prince had *Coatetl*, a virgin born in Chalco of most noble parents, in whom the Toltecan and Chechemecan blood were both mixed. The public rejoicings lasted sixty days, and the entertainments consisted of wrestling, running, and combats with wild beasts, exercises which were agreeable to the genius of the Chechemecas, and in all of them the prince Nopaltzin distinguished himself. After the example of these royal personages, the two nations continued to increase their alliance by inter-marriages until they became one, which taking its name from the most noble party, was called Acolhua, and the kingdom Acolhuacan; the name of Chechemecas being left to those who, preferring the exercise of the chase to the toil of agriculture, or grown impatient of subordination, went off to the mountains, which are towards the north and the north-west of the vale of Mexico, where yielding themselves up to the impulse of their barbarous liberty, without a chief, without laws, without a fixed dwelling, or the other advantages of society, they employed the day in pursuit of animals for prey, and when fatigued sunk down to sleep wherever night overtook them. These barbarians mingled with the Otonies, a nation which was attached to the same course of life, occupied a tract of more than three hundred miles of country, and the Spaniards were harassed by their descendants for many years after the conquest of Mexico.

When the nuptial festivities were at an end, Xolotl divided his kingdom into several distinct states, and assigned the possession of them to his sons in law, and the other nobles of each nation. He granted to prince Acolhuatzin the state of Azcapozalco, eighteen miles to the west of Tezcuco, and from him descended the kings under whose government the Mexicans continued more than fifty years. On Chiconquauhtli he conferred the state of Xaltocan; and on Tzontecomatl, that of Coatlichan.

SECT. VII.  
Division of  
the states, and  
rebellions.

The population daily increased, and with it the civilization of the people; but at the same time ambition and other passions which had  
lain



BOOK II.

lain dormant from the want of ideas, in times of a savage life, began to awaken in their minds. Xolotl, who, during the greatest period of his reign, had exercised great clemency in his government, had found himself, in the last years of his life, constrained to use severe measures to check the restless disposition of some rebels, occasionally depriving them of their offices, or punishing the most criminal with death. These just chastisements, instead of intimidating, exasperated them so much, that they formed the atrocious design of taking the king's life, for the execution of which an occasion speedily presented itself. A little time previous to this the king had expressed a wish to increase the waters of his gardens where he was accustomed to take recreation, and frequently also relieved his burden of years with sleep, to which he was invited by the coolness and charms of the place. Being acquainted with this, the rebels dammed up the little river which crossed the city, and opened a ditch to conduct the waters to the gardens; waited the time at which the king was accustomed to go to sleep, then raising the dam let all the water at once into the gardens, and suddenly overflowed them. They flattered themselves that their vicious aim would never be detected; as the disaster of the king might be imputed to an accident, or to ill conducted measures by his subjects, who sincerely desired to serve their sovereign: but they deceived themselves, and their attempt proved abortive; as the king had secret intelligence of their conspiracy; but dissembling his knowledge of it, he retired at his usual time into the garden, and went to sleep on an elevated spot, where he was exposed to no danger. When he afterwards saw the water enter, although the treason was now apparent, he continued his dissimulation to ridicule his enemies: "I," he then said, "was persuaded that my subjects loved me, but now I see they love me still more than I believed. I was desirous of increasing the water of my garden, and behold my subjects have done it without any expence: it is proper therefore to rejoice at my happiness." He then ordered there should be rejoicings in the court, and when they were concluded, he departed full of anguish and disdain for Tenayuca, resolved to inflict exemplary punishment on the conspirators; but there he was seized with a mortal distemper which moderated his passion.

Being

Being now sensible of an approaching death, he called prince Nopaltzin to him, his daughters, and Acolhuatzin his son-in-law, the other princes being now dead, and recommended to them concord among themselves, the care of the people committed to their charge, the protection of the nobility, and clemency to all their subjects; after which, a few hours, in the midst of the tears and complaints of his children, he ended his life in a very advanced age, having reigned in that country, as appears, more than forty years. He was a robust and courageous man, but of a most affectionate heart to his children, and mild to his people. His reign would have been more happy had its duration been more short (*q*).

The news of the death of the king immediately spread over the whole kingdom, and speedy advice of it was given to the principal lords, that they might attend at the funeral. They adorned the royal corpse with various little figures of gold and silver, which the Chechemecas, having been instructed by the Toltecas, had begun now to work, and placed it in a chair made of gum copal and other aromatic substances; and thus it remained five days, while the lords summoned to the funeral arrived. After they were all assembled, the corpse was burnt, according to the custom of the Chechemecas, and the ashes gathered in an urn of the hardest stone. This urn was kept exposed for forty days in a hall of the royal mansion, where daily the nobility thronged to pay their homage of tears to their deceased sovereign, and the urn was afterwards carried to a cave in the neighbourhood of the city with similar demonstrations of grief.

As soon as the funeral of Xolotl was concluded, they celebrated the ascension of prince Nopaltzin to the throne with acclamations and rejoicings for other forty days. When the lords took leave of their new king to return to their respective states, one of them made this short harangue: "Great king and lord, as your subjects and servants, "we go in obedience to your commands, to govern the people you "have committed to our charge, bearing in our hearts the pleasure of "having seen you on the throne, not less due to your virtue than your "birth. We acknowledge the good fortune unequalled which we

BOOK II.  
SECT. VIII.  
Death and  
funeral of  
Xolotl.

SECT. IX.  
Nopaltzin  
II. king of  
the Cheche-  
mecas.

(*q*) Torquemada gives Xolotl one hundred and thirteen years of reign, and more than two hundred years of life. On this see our Dissertation.



BOOK II. “ have in serving so illustrious and powerful a lord ; and we request  
 “ you to regard us with the eyes of a real father, and to protect us  
 “ with your might, that we may rest secure under your shade. You  
 “ are as well the water which restores, as the fire which destroys, and  
 “ in your hands hold equally our life and our death.”

The lords having taken leave, the king remained in Tenayuca, with his sister the widow of the prince Chiconquauhtli. He was then, as far as we can conjecture, about sixty years of age, and had sons and grandsons. His lawful children by the Toltecan queen were Tlotzin, Quauhtequihua, and Apopozoc. On Tlotzin, who was the first born, he conferred the government of Tezcucó, that he might begin to learn the difficult art of governing men ; and the other two were placed over the states of Zacatlan and Tenamitic (*r*).

The king passed one year in the court of Tenayuca, arranging the affairs of the state, which were not so settled as they had been at first. From thence he went to Tezcucó, to treat with his son about the most convenient measures to be taken to restore the former tranquillity of his kingdom. While he was there he went one day into the royal gardens with his son, and some other lords of the court, and as they were in conversation, he burst suddenly into a flood of tears ; being requested to explain the cause, “ Two causes,” said he, “ produce  
 “ my tears, the one the memory of my late father, which is revived  
 “ by the sight of this place where he used to take recreation ; the  
 “ other is the comparison which I make of these happy days with the  
 “ present bitter moments. When my father planted these gardens,  
 “ he had quiet subjects, who served him with sincerity, and received  
 “ the offices which he conferred upon them, with humility and  
 “ gratitude ; but at present ambition and discord are every where pre-  
 “ vailing. It troubles me to be obliged to use the subjects as ene-  
 “ mies, whom I once in this place treated as friends and brothers.  
 “ Do you, my son,” addressing Tlotzin, “ keep constantly in your

(*r*) If we are to adopt the chronology of Torquemada, we must give Nopaltzin when he mounted the throne one hundred and thirty years of age ; as when he arrived with his father in the country of Anahuac, he was at least eighteen or twenty years, which added to the one hundred and thirteen years, which, according to Torquemada, Xolotl reigned in that country, make one hundred and thirty-one, or one hundred and thirty-three. On this see our Second Dissertation.

“ eyes the image of your grandfather, and strive to imitate the examples of prudence and justice which he left us. Strengthen your heart with every virtue which you will have occasion for, to govern your subjects.” After condoling some time with his son, the king departed for his court of Tenayuca.

The prince Acolhuatzin, who was still living, thinking the boundaries of his state of Azcapozalco too narrow, resolved to take possession of Tepotzotlan, and in fact took it by force, in spite of the resistance made by Chalchiuhcua, lord of that state. It is to be believed, that Acolhuatzin would not have done so violent an act without the express consent of the king, who was, probably, willing to revenge himself in that manner of some offence he had received from Chalchiuhcua.

The contest was a good deal more bloody which arose a little after from interests of a very different nature. Huetzin, lord of Coatlicchan, son of the late prince Tzontecomatl (s), was desirous of marrying Atotoztli, a noble and beautiful virgin, and grand-daughter of the queen. Jacazozotl, lord of Tepetlaoztoc, made similar pretensions; but either being more strongly enamoured, or more violent in temper, not content with having demanded her of her father, he was willing to render himself master of his beauty by arms; and for this purpose collected a small army of his subjects, which was joined by Tochinteuçtli, who had been lord of Quahuacan, but was dispossessed on account of his misdeeds, and banished to Tepetlaoztoc. Huetzin, apprized of this intent, went to meet him with a greater number of troops, and gave him battle in the neighbourhood of Tezcucó, in which some of Jacazozotl's people were slain along with himself, and the rest of the army routed. Tochinteuçtli saved himself by flight, sheltering himself in the city of Huexotzinco, on the other side of the mountains. Huetzin, having got rid of his rival, with the con-

(s) Torquemada makes Huetzin, son of Itzmitl, and him son of Tzontecomatl in the thirteenth chapter of book the first; but in chapter 40, he says, that Itzmitl was one of those who came with Xolotl from Amaquemican, so that he makes him born before his father Tzontecomatl, as he was a young man only when he came to Anahuac; and he did not come before the 47th year of the reign of Xolotl, as the same author affirms. Besides in one place, he makes Itzmitl a pure Chichemecan; and in another place the son of an Acolhuan. But who is capable of marking all the contradictions and anachronisms of Torquemada?



BOOK II. sent of the king took possession of the maid and the state of Tepet-  
laotoc.

After these small wars of the feudatory princes, one more considerable arose between the crown and the province of Tollantzinco, which was in rebellion. The king himself took the field in person with a large army; but as the rebels were numerous in force and well disciplined, the royal army was worsted during nineteen days which the war lasted, until being reinforced by new troops, under the command of Tlotzin, he defeated the rebels, and punished the heads of the rebellion in the most rigorous manner. Their evil example, when imitated by other lords, met with the same fate.

Nopaltzin had just restored tranquillity to his kingdom, when the famous prince Acolhuatzin, first lord of Azcapozalco, died, leaving the state to his son Tezozomoc. His funeral was celebrated with great magnificence, the king and the nobility of both the nations of Acolhua and Chechemeca attending.

SECT. X.  
Tlotzin III.  
king of the  
Chechemeca.

The king himself did not long survive, having reigned thirty-two years, and declared Tlotzin, his first born, successor to his crown. The funeral rites were performed at the same court, and with the same form and ceremonies as that of Xolotl, to whom he was similar not less in disposition than in robustness and courage.

Among the lords who were present at the accession of the new king to the throne, were his two brothers Quauhtiquehua and Apopozoc, whom he entertained for one year in his palace. Tlotzin was of so benevolent and affectionate a disposition, he was the whole delight of his vassals. All the nobles sought pretences to visit him, and enjoy the pleasure and charms of his conversation. Notwithstanding his natural disposition to peace, he took great care of the affairs of war, making his subjects frequently exercise in arms, and he himself was fond of the chase; but we know no particular acts or events of his reign, during thirty-six years which he occupied the throne of Acolhuacan. He died afflicted with the most severe pains in Tenayuca. His ashes were deposited in an urn of costly stone, which was for forty days exposed to the sight of the people under a pavilion.

SECT. XI.  
Quinaltzin  
IV. king of

Tlotzin was succeeded in the kingdom by his son Quinaltzin, had by Quauhcihuatzin, daughter of the lord of Huexotla. His exaltation

to

to the throne was celebrated with greater solemnity than that of his predecessors; not at Tenayuca, but at Tezcucó, where he established his court, and from that time until the conquest of the Spaniards, that city continued the capital of the kingdom of Acolhuacan. In his passage from the new to the old court, he made himself be transported in a portable chair or open litter, borne on the shoulders of four principal lords, and under an umbrella which was carried by four others. Until that time all the sovereigns had used to walk on foot. This king was the first to whom vanity suggested such a kind of pomp, and his example was imitated by all the kings and nobles of that country, who strove to surpass each other in ostentatious grandeur. An emulation not less pernicious to states than to princes themselves.

BOOK II.  
the Chechemecas.

The commencement of his government was very tranquil; but the states of Meztitlan and Tototepec, which are situated in the mountains lying to the north of that capital, soon rose in rebellion. The moment the king received the advice, he marched with a great army, and sent to tell the heads of the rebellion, that if their courage was equal to their perfidy, they should descend within two days to the plain of Tlaximalco, where their fate would be decided by battle; if not, he was resolved to put flames to their city, without pardon to women or children. The rebels, as they were already well prepared, came down before the time appointed to the plain, to shew their courage. The signal for battle being given, the attack became furious and obstinate on both sides until night separated the armies, leaving the victory undecided. They continued for forty days frequently engaging, the rebels being no way discouraged by the advantages which the royal troops daily gained; but perceiving at length, by the slaughter and diminution of their forces, that their ruin was inevitable, they surrendered to their sovereign, who, after rigorous punishment of the ringleaders of the rebellion, pardoned the crime of the people. The same conduct was observed with Tepepolco, which had also rebelled.

This spirit of rebellion spread like contagion over all the kingdom; and Tepepolco was scarcely subdued when Huchuitoca, Mizquic, Totolapa, and four other cities, declared a revolt. The king chose to go in person with a strong body of troops against Totolapa, and sent against the other six cities as many detachments under command of brave and faithful generals; his success was such, that in a very short space of



## BOOK II.

of time, and without any considerable loss, he brought all the seven cities again under his obedience. These victories were celebrated with great rejoicings during eight days in the court, and rewards given to the officers and soldiers who had distinguished themselves. As the evil example of some states had excited others to rebellion, so did the unsuccessful issue serve in future as a caution not to form new conspiracies against the loyalty due to their sovereign; from whence, during the rest of his government, which, according to historians, lasted sixty years, Quinatzin enjoyed the utmost tranquillity.

When he died they observed ceremonies to him which had never been practised with his ancestors; they opened his body, took out his bowels, and prepared it with different aromatic substances, to keep it some time free from corruption. They afterwards placed it in a great chair, clothed in royal habits, and armed with a bow and arrow, and put at his feet a wooden eagle, and behind him a tyger, to signify his bravery and intrepidity. In this state it was exposed for forty days; and after the usual mourning, burnt, and the ashes buried in a cave of the mountains neighbouring to Tezcuco.

Quinatzin was succeeded on the throne by his son Techotlalla; but the events of this and the following Chechemecan kings reigns being connected with those of the Mexicans, who had at this period (in the fourteenth century of the vulgar era), founded their famous capital, we reserve the relation of them to another place, judging it sufficient at present to lay before the reader the series of all the kings, annexing, as far as is known, the year of the vulgar era in which they began their reigns, that we may afterwards make some mention of the nations which arrived before the Mexicans in that country.

## Chechemecan Kings.

*Xolotl*, began to reign in the 12th century.

*Nopaltzin*, in the 13th century.

*Tlotzin*, in the 14th century.

*Quinatzin*, in the 14th century.

*Techotlalla*, in the 14th century.

*Ixtlilxochitl* (t), in the 1406.

Be-

(t) We do not reckon Ixtlilxochitl among the Chechemecan kings, because he was only created governor of Tezcuco by the Spaniards. It is therefore to be doubted, if Cuicuilzcatzin

Between this and the following kings reign, the tyrants Tezozomoc and Maxtla occupied the throne of Acolhuacan.

<i>Nezahualcoyotl,</i>	in the year 1426.
<i>Nezahualpilli,</i>	in the year 1470.
<i>Cacamatzin,</i>	in the year 1516.
<i>Cuicuitzcatzin,</i>	in the year 1520.
<i>Coanacotzin,</i>	in the year 1520.

We cannot fix the year in which the five first kings began to reign, because we do not know how long Xolotl and Techotlalla reigned; we, however, think it probable, that the Chechemecan monarchy had a beginning in Anahuac about the end of the twelfth century, and lasted 330 years, until about 1521, at which time it ceased with the kingdom of Mexico. At least eleven lawful kings, and two tyrants occupied the throne.

The Acolhui arrived in the country of Anahuac after the beginning of the 13th century. With regard to other nations, there is an incredible difference of opinion and confusion in historians respecting their origin, their number, and the time in which they settled in Anahuac. The great study which I have made to trace truth has served only to increase my uncertainty, and to make me despair of ever knowing hereafter what is hitherto unknown. Leaving aside, therefore, all fables, we shall adhere to what is certain, or at least probable.

The Olmecas and the Xicallancas, whether one nation, or two distinct nations, but constantly allied and connected together, were so ancient in the country of Anahuac, that many authors account them prior to the Toltecas (*u*). Of their origin we know nothing, nor do the ancient pictures tell us more than that they inhabited the country circumjacent to the great mountain Matlalcueje, and that being driven

SECT. XII.  
The Olmecas and the  
Otomies.

catzin is to be numbered among these kings; as in spite of, and contrary to the right of Coanacotzin, he was intruded on the kingdom of Acolhuacan by Montezuma, through the intrigues of Cortes.

(*u*) Some authors, and among them the celebrated D. Siguenza, have wrote that the Olmecas passed from the Atlantic isles, and that they alone came to Anahuac from the quarter of the East, all the other nations having come from the region of the North: but we know no foundation for this opinion.



## BOOK I.

from thence by the Teochechemecas, or Tlascalans, they transported themselves to the coast of the gulf of Mexico (x).

The Otomies, who formed one of the most numerous nations, were probably one of the most ancient in that country; but they continued for many ages in barbarism, living scattered in the caverns of the mountains, and supporting themselves by the chase, in which they were most dextrous. They occupied a tract of more than three hundred miles of land, from the mountains of Izmiquilpan towards the north-west, bordering in the east and west on other nations equally savage. In the fifteenth century, either being compelled by force, or stimulated by the example of other nations, they began to live in society, under subjection to the crown of Acolhuacan. In the country of Anahuac, and likewise in the vale of Mexico, they settled an infinite number of places; the greater, and especially the most considerable of them, such as those of Xilotepec and Huitzapan, were in the vicinage of the country which they occupied before; the others were scattered among the Matlatzincas and Tlascalans, and in other provinces of the kingdom, preserving even down to our times, their primitive language in the insular colonies, though surrounded by other nations. We are not, however, to conclude, that the whole nation was then brought to a state of civil life, as a great part, and possibly the most numerous, were still left together with the Chechemecas in the condition of savages. The barbarians of both nations, which were confounded together by the Spaniards, under the name of Chechemecas, made themselves famous by their invasions, and were not finally subdued by the Spaniards until the seventeenth century. The Otomies have always been reputed the most rude nation of Anahuac, not more from the difficulty every body finds in understanding their language than their servile state of life; as even in the time of the Mexican kings they were treated as slaves. Their language is very difficult and full of aspirations, which they make partly in the throat, partly in the nose; but otherwise it is sufficiently copious and expressive. Anciently they were renowned for their dexterity in the chase; at present they traffick in coarse cloths for the dress of the other Indians.

(x) Boturini conjectures, that the Olmecas, when driven from their country, went to the Antilles, or Caribbee Islands, and South America. This is no more than conjecture.

The nation of the Tarascas occupied the vast, rich, and pleasant country of Michuacan, where they multiplied considerably, and settled many cities and an infinite number of villages. Their kings were rivals of the Mexicans, and had frequent wars with them. Their artists excelled, or vied with those of other nations; at least after the conquest of Mexico: the best Mosaic works were made in Michuacan, and there only this valuable art was preserved unto our time. The Tarascas were idolatrous, but not so cruel as the Mexicans in their worship. Their language is copious, sweet, and sonorous. They make frequent use of the soft R; their syllables, for the most part, consist of a single consonant, and a single vowel. Besides the natural advantage of their country, the Tarascas had the good fortune to have D. Vasca di Quiroga for their first bishop, one of the most distinguished prelates Spain has produced, worthy of being compared with the ancient fathers of the church, and whose memory was preserved fresh unto our time, and will last perpetually among these people. The country of Michuacan, which is one of the finest of the New World, was annexed to the crown of Spain by the free and spontaneous act of its lawful sovereign, without costing the Spaniards a drop of blood, although it is probable that the recent example of the ruin of the Mexican empire, intimidated and impelled that monarch to such a concession (*y*).

BOOK II.  
SECT. XIII.  
The Tarascas.

The Mazahuas were once a part of the nation of the Otomies, as the languages of both nations are but different dialects of the same tongue; but this diversity between two nations so jealous of preserving their idioms uncorrupted, is a clear argument of the great anti-

SECT. XIV.  
The Mazahuas, Matlatzincas, and other nations.

(*y*) Boturini says, that the Mexicans finding themselves besieged by the Spaniards, sent an embassy to the king of Michuacan, to procure his alliance; that he assembled an hundred thousand Tarascas, and as many Teochechemecas, in the province of Avalos; but that, being intimidated by certain visions which his sister had, who was once dead but returned to life again, he discharged the army, and abandoned the undertaking of succouring the Mexicans, as he had intended. But all this account is a string of fables. As far as we know, no author of that age makes mention of such an event. Whence came these hundred thousand Teochechemecas, who were so quickly assembled? Why was the army collected in the province most distant from Mexico? Who has ever seen the king of France order his troops to be assembled in Flanders, to succour some city of Spain? The resurrection of the princess is a fable founded on the memorable occurrence, respecting the sister of Montezuma, of which we shall speak hereafter.



## BOOK II.

quity of their separation. The principal places which they inhabited were on the western mountains of the vale of Mexico, and formed the province of Mazahuacan, belonging to the crown of Tacuba.

The Matlatzincas made a considerable state in the fertile vale of Toluca; and, however great, anciently, their reputation was for bravery, they were, notwithstanding, subjected to the crown of Mexico, by king Axayacatl.

The Miztecas and Zapotecas peopled the vast countries of their name, to the south-east of Tezcucó. The numerous states into which these two countries were divided, continued a long time under several lords or rulers of the same nations, until they were subdued by the Mexicans. Those nations were civilized and industrious; they had their laws, exercised the arts of the Mexicans, and made use of the same method to compute time, and the same paintings to perpetuate the memory of events, in which they represented the creation of the world, the universal deluge, the confusion of tongues; although the whole was intermixed with various fables (z). Since the conquest, the Miztecas and Zapotecas have been the most industrious people of New Spain. While the commerce of silk lasted, they were the feeders of the worms; and to their labours is owing all the cochineal, which for many years, until the present time, has been imported from Mexico into Europe.

The Chiapanese have been the first peoplers of the New World, if we give credit to their traditions. They say that Votan, the grandson of that respectable old man who built the great ark to save himself and family from the deluge, and one of those who undertook the building of that lofty edifice which was to reach heaven, went, by express command of the Lord, to people that land. They say also that the first peoplers came from the quarter of the North, and that when they arrived at Soconusco, they separated, some going to inhabit the country of Nicaragua, and others remaining in Chiapan. This country, as historians say, was not governed by a king, but by two military chiefs, elected by priests. Thus they remained until they were subjected by

(z) See the work of Fra Gregorio Garzia Dominicano, entitled, the *Origin of the Indians*, in book v. chap. 4. concerning the mythology of the Miztecas.

the last kings of Mexico to that crown. They made the same use of BOOK II.  
 paintings as the Mexicans, and had the same method of computing  
 time; but the figures with which they represented days, years, and  
 months, were totally different.

Of the Cohuixcas, the Cuitlatecas, the Jopas, the Mazatecas, the  
 Popolocas, the Chinantecas, and the Totonacas, we know nothing of  
 the origin, nor the time when they arrived in Anahuac. We shall say  
 something of their particular customs when ever it will illustrate the  
 history of the Mexicans.

But of all the nations which peopled the region of Anahuac, the  
 most renowned and the most signalized in the history of Mexico, were  
 those vulgarly called the Nahuatlacas. This name, the etymology of  
 which we have explained, in the beginning of this history, was prin-  
 cipally given to those seven nations, or rather those seven tribes of the  
 same nation, who arrived in that country after the Chechemecas, and  
 peopled the little islands, banks, and boundaries of the Mexican lakes.  
 These tribes were the Sochimilcas, the Chalchefe, the Tapanecas, the  
 Colhuas, the Tlahuicas, the Tlascalans, and the Mexicans. The origin  
 of all these tribes was the province of Aztlan, from whence came the  
 Mexicans, or from some other contiguous to it, and peopled with the  
 same nation. All historians represent them as originally of one and  
 the same country: all of them spoke the same language. The dif-  
 ferent names by which they have been known, were taken from the  
 places which they settled, or from those in which they established  
 themselves.

SECT. XV.  
 The Nahu-  
 atlacas.

The Sochimilcas derived their name from the great city *Xochimilco*  
 which they founded on the southern shore of the lake of sweet water  
 or Chalco; the Chalchefe, from the city of Chalco, upon the eastern  
 shore of the same lake; the Colhuas, from Colhuacan; the Mexicans,  
 from Mexico; the Tlascalans, from Tlascala; and the Tlahuicas, from  
 the land where they established themselves; which, from its abounding  
 in cinnabar, was called *Tlabuican* (a). The Tepanecas possibly had

(g) *Tlabuitl*, is the Mexican name of cinnabar; and *Tlabuican* means the place or country  
 of Cinnabar. Some authors call them *Tlalhuicas*, and derive the name from a place of that  
 land called *Tlalhuic*; but besides that we never heard of such a place, the name does not ap-  
 pear conforming with the language.



BOOK II. their name from a place called Tepan (*b*), where they had been before they settled their famous city Azcapozalco.

It is beyond a doubt that these tribes did not arrive together in that country, but at different times, and in the order we have mentioned; but there is a great difference among historians respecting the precise time of their arrival in Anahuac. We are persuaded, for the reasons set forth in our dissertations, that the first six tribes arrived under conduct of the six lords who made their appearance immediately after the Chechemecas, and there was not so great an interval as Acosta supposes, between their arrival and that of the Mexicans.

The Colhuas, whom in general the Spanish historians confound with the Acolhuas, from the affinity of their names, founded the small monarchy of Colhuacan, which was annexed afterwards to the crown of Mexico, by the marriage of a princess, heiress of that state, with a king of Mexico.

The Tepanecas had also their petty kings, among whom the first was prince Acolhuatzin, after having married the daughter of Xolotl. His descendants usurped, as we shall relate, the kingdom of Acolhuacan, and governed all that country, until the arms of the Mexicans, joined with those of the true heir of Acolhuacan, destroyed both the tyrant and monarchy of Tepaneca.

Sect. XVI.  
The Tlascalans.

The Tlascalans, whom Torquemada and other authors call Teochechemecas, and consider as a tribe of the (*n*) Chechemecan nation, established

(*e*) Several authors call them *Tepanecas*; both are Mexican. *Tepanecatl* means *the inhabitant of the palace*; *Tepanecatl*, *inhabitant of a stony place*. Others give it a very violent etymology.

(*c*) Torquemada, not only says that the Tlascalans were Teochechemecas, but likewise affirms, in lib. iii. cap. 10. that these *Teochechemecas*, were *Otomies*. If the Tlascalans were Otomies, why did they not speak the language of the Otomies? And if they ever did speak it, why did they give it up for the Mexican! Where is there an instance of a free nation abandoning its own native language, to adopt that of its enemies? Nor is it less incredible that the Chechemecas were Otomies, as the above author supposes, although in lib. i. cap. 2. he affirms the contrary. Who forced the Chechemecas to give up their primitive language? He only who was unacquainted with the character of these nations, and knew not how constant they were in retaining their national language, could be capable of persuading us that the Chechemecas, by their communication and alliance with the Acolhuas, abandoned the language of the Otomies for the Mexican. If the true Otomies have not, during so many ages, altered their idiom, neither under the dominion of the Mexicans, nor under that of the Spaniards, how is it credible that the Chechemecas should entirely change their

established themselves, originally, in *Poyauhtlan*, a place situated on the eastern shore of the lake of Tezcucó, between the court and the village of Chemalhuacan. There they lived for some time in great misery, supporting themselves solely by the chase, on account of the want of arable soil; but being multiplied in their numbers, and desirous of extending the boundaries of their territory, they drew upon themselves the hatred of the surrounding nations. The Sochimilcas, the Colhuas, the Tepanecas, and probably also the Chalchese, who, by being borderers on them, were most exposed to injury, made a league together, and equipped a considerable army to drive such dangerous settlers from the vale of Mexico. The Tlascalans, whom the consciousness of their usurpations, kept always vigilant, came well arrayed for an encounter. The battle was one of the most bloody and memorable which appears in the history of Mexico. The Tlascalans, though inferior in number, made such a slaughter of the enemy, that they left the field covered with carcases, and a part of the lake on the border of which they had engaged, tinged with blood. Notwithstanding they came off so gloriously in this battle, they determined to abandon that quarter, being well persuaded that while they remained there they would be daily harassed by their neighbours; for which reason having reviewed the whole country by means of their emissaries, and finding no situation where they could jointly establish themselves, they agreed to separate, one part of them going towards the South, the other to the North. The latter, after a short journey, settled themselves, with the permission of the Chechemecan king, in Tollantzinco, and in Quauh-

their language, being masters of that country, and occupying the throne of Acolhuacan from the time of Xolotl the founder of that kingdom, until the conquest of Mexico. I do not doubt, however, that the proper language of the ancient Chechemecas was the same with that of the Acolhuas and Nahuatlacas, that is, the Mexican. I am of the same opinion respecting the Toltecas, whatever other authors may say; nor can I, after the most diligent study of history, alter my sentiments. We know that the names of the places from whence the Toltecas and Chechemecas came, and of those which they settled in Anahuac, of the persons of both nations, and of the years which they used, were Mexican. We know that the Toltecas and Chechemecas, the Chechemecas and Acolhuas, from the first had communication with each other, and understood each other reciprocally without an interpreter. The Mexican language having spread as far as Nicaragua, is not to be ascribed to any thing else than the dispersion of the Toltecas who spoke it; as it is known that the Nahuatlacas ever went beyond Chiapan. In short, we find nothing to support the contrary opinion, although it is so common among our historians.

chinanco



## BOOK II.

chinanco. The former travelling round the great volcano Popocatepec, through Tetella and Tochimilco, founded the city of Quauhquechollan, in the neighbourhood of Atrisco; and some, proceeding still farther, founded Amaliuhcan, and other villages; and thus extended themselves as far as *Poyauhtecatli* or the mountain Orizaba, to which they probably gave such a name in memory of the place in the vale of Mexico which they had quitted.

But the most numerous and respectable part of the tribe, directed their way by Cholula to the borders of the great mountain Matlalcueye, from whence they drove the Olmecas and Xicallancas, the ancient inhabitants of that country, and slew their king Colopechtli. Here they established themselves under a chief, named *Colbuatateuētlī*, contriving to fortify themselves also, to be the more able to resist the neighbouring people if they should incline to attack them. In fact it was not long before the Huexozincas and other people, who knew of the bravery and number of their new neighbours, fearing they would, in time, become troublesome, levied a great army to expel them wholly from the country. The attack was so sudden, that the Tlascalans were forced to retreat to the top of that great mountain: finding themselves there in the greatest perplexity, they sent ambassadors to implore the protection of the Chechemecan king, and obtained from him a large body of troops. The Huexozincas not having forces sufficient to contend with the royal army, applied for assistance to the Tepanecas, who they believed would not let pass so fair an opportunity of revenging themselves; but the tragic event of Pofauhtlan was still in their memories, and although they sent troops, these were enjoined not to do hurt to the Tlascalans; and the Tlascalans themselves were advised not to esteem them as enemies, but to rest confident that that nation was not sent for any other purpose than to deceive the Huexozincas, and not to disturb the harmony which subsisted between them and the Tepanecas. By the aid of the Tezcucans, and the perfidious inaction of the Tepanecas, the Huexozincas were defeated, and obliged to return to their state in disgrace. The Tlascalans being freed from so great a danger, and having made peace with their neighbours, returned to their first establishment, to continue their settlement and population.

Such

Such was the origin of the famous city and republic of Tlascala, the perpetual rival of the Mexicans, and occasion of their ruin. At first they all obeyed one chief; but afterwards when their population was considerably advanced, the city was parted into four divisions, called *Tepeticpac*, *Ocotelolco*, *Quiakuixtlan*, and *Tizatlan*. Every division had its lord, to whom all the places dependent on such division were likewise subject; so that the whole state was composed of four small monarchies; but these four lords, together with other nobles of the first rank, formed a kind of aristocracy for the general state. This diet or senate was the umpire of war and peace. It prescribed the number of troops which were to be raised, and the generals who were to command them. In the state, although it was circumscribed, there were many cities and large villages, in which, in 1520, there were more than one hundred and fifty thousand houses, and more than five hundred thousand inhabitants. The district of the republic was fortified on the western quarter with ditches and entrenchments, and on the east with a wall six miles in length; towards the south it was, by nature, defended by the mountain Matlalcueye, and by other mountains, on the north.

The Tlascalans were warlike, courageous, and jealous of their honour and their liberty. They preserved, for a long time, the splendor of their republic, in spite of the opposition they suffered from their enemies; until at length, being in confederacy with the Spaniards against their ancient rivals the Mexicans, they were involved in the common ruin. They were idolatrous, and as superstitious and cruel in their form of worship as the Mexicans. Their favourite deity was *Camaxtle*, the same which was worshipped by the Mexicans, under the name of *Huitzilopochtli*. Their arts were the same as those of other neighbouring nations. Their commerce consisted principally in maize and cochineal. From the abundance of maize the name of *Tlascallan* was given to the capital, which means the place of bread. Their cochineal was esteemed above any other, and, after the conquest, brought yearly to the capital a revenue of two hundred thousand crowns; but they entirely abandoned this commerce, for reasons we shall mention elsewhere.

The



## BOOK II.

## SECT. XVII.

Migration of  
the Mexicans  
to the coun-  
try of Ana-  
huac.

The Aztecas or Mexicans, who were the last people who settled in Anahuac, and are the chief subject of our history, lived until about the year 1160 of the vulgar era, in Aztlan, a country situated to the north of the gulf of California, according to what appears from the route they pursued in their migration, and the conclusions made by the Spaniards in their travels towards these countries (*d*). The cause of abandoning their native country may have been the same which other nations had. But whatever it was, it will not be altogether useless to leave to the free judgment of the reader that which the Mexican historians themselves relate of the birth of such a resolution.

There was, say they, among the Aztecas, a person of great authority called *Huitziton*, to whose opinion all paid great deference. This person exerted himself, though it is not known for what reason, to persuade his countrymen to change their country, and while he was meditating on his purpose, he heard once, by accident, a little bird singing on the branches of a tree, whose notes imitated the Mexican word *Tihui*, which means, *let us go*. This appeared a favourable opportunity to obtain his wish of his countrymen. Taking, therefore, another respectable person with him, he conducted him to that tree where the little bird used to sing, and thus addressed him: "Do you not attend, my friend *Tecpaltzin*, to what this little bird says, *Tihui Tihui*, which it repeats every moment to us; what can it mean, but that we must leave this country and find ourselves another? Without doubt, it is the warning of some secret divinity who watches over our welfare: let us obey, therefore, his voice, and not draw his anger upon us by a refusal." *Tecpaltzin* gave full assent to this interpretation, either from his opinion of the wisdom of *Huitziton*, or because he was likewise prepossessed with the same de-

(*d*) In our dissertations we speak of these travels from New Mexico towards the North. Betancourt makes mention of them in part ii. tratt. i. cap. 10. of his *Teatro Mexicano*. This author makes Aztlan two thousand seven hundred miles distant from Mexico. Boturini says, Aztlan was a province of Asia. But I do not know what reasons he had for so singular an opinion. In several charts, published in the sixteenth century, this province appears situated to the north of the gulf of California, and I do not doubt that it is to be found in that quarter, though at a distance from the gulf, as the distance mentioned by Betancourt seems very probable.

fire.

fire. Two persons, so respectable having agreed in sentiment, they were not long in drawing the body of the nation over to their party.

Although we do not give credit to such an account, it does not, however, appear altogether improbable; as it is not difficult for a person who is reputed wise, to persuade an ignorant and a superstitious people, through motives of religion, to whatever he pleases. It would be a much harder task to persuade us of what the Spanish historians generally report, that the Mexicans set out on their migration, by express command of the demon. The good historians of the sixteenth century, and those who have copied them, suppose it altogether unquestionable that the demon had continual and familiar commerce with all the idolatrous nations of the New World; and scarcely recount an event of history, of which they do not make him the author. *But however certain they may be, that the malignity of those spirits impell them to do all the hurt they can to man, and that they have shewn themselves sometimes in visible forms to seduce them, especially to those who have not, by regeneration, entered into the bosom of the church;* it is not, however, to be imagined that such apparitions were so very frequent, or that their intercourse was so familiar with the above mentioned nations as these historians believe; the Supreme Power who watches, with benign providence, over all his creatures, commits to any such enemies of the human race no powers to hurt it. Our readers, therefore, who may have read of like events in other authors, ought not to wonder if they do not find us equally credulous. We are not disposed to ascribe any effect to the demon, on the bare testimony of some Mexican historians, as they may easily have fallen into errors, from the superstitious ideas with which their minds were darkened, or the impositions of priests that are common among idolatrous nations.

The migration of the Aztecas, however, which is certain, whatever might have been their motive for undertaking it, happened, as near as we can conjecture, about the year 1160 of the vulgar era. Torquemada says he has observed an arm of the sea (e), or a great river, represented

(e) I believe this pretended arm of the sea is no other than the representation of the universal deluge, painted in the Mexican pictures before the beginning of their migration, as appears from the copy, published by Gemelli, of a picture shewn to him by the celebrated Dott.



## BOOK II.

sented in all the ancient paintings of this migration. If any river was ever represented in such paintings, it must have been the *Colorado* or Red River, which discharges itself into the gulf of California, in latitude  $32\frac{1}{2}$ , as this is the most considerable river of those which lie in the route they travelled. Having passed, therefore, the Red River from beyond the latitude of 35, they proceeded towards the south-east, as far as the river *Gila*, where they stopped for some time; for at present there are still remains to be seen of the great edifices built by them on the borders of that river. From thence having resumed their course towards the S. S. E. they stopped in about 29 degrees of latitude, at a place which is more than two hundred and fifty miles distant from the city of Chihuahua, towards the N. N. W. This place is known by the name of *Casa grandi*, on account of an immense edifice still existing, which, agreeable to the universal tradition of these people, was built by the Mexicans in their peregrination. This edifice is constructed on the plan of those of New Mexico, that is, consisting of three floors with a terrace above them, and without any entrance to the under floor. The door for entrance to the building is on the second floor, so that a scaling ladder is necessary; and the inhabitants of New Mexico build in this manner, in order to be less exposed to the attack of their enemies; putting out the scaling ladder only for those to whom they give admission into their house. No doubt the Aztecas had the same motive for raising their edifice on this plan, as every mark of a fortress is to be observed about it, being defended on one side by a lofty mountain, and the rest of it being surrounded by a wall about seven feet thick, the foundations of which are still existing. In this fortress there are stones as large as mill-stones to be seen; the beams of the roof are of pine, and well finished. In the centre of this vast fabric is a little mount made on purpose, by what appears, to keep guard on, and observe the enemy. There have been some ditches formed in this place, and several kitchen utensils have been found,

Siguenza. Boturini alleges this arm of the sea to be the gulf of California, as he is persuaded that the Mexicans passed from Aztlan to California, and from thence crossing the gulf transported themselves to Culiacan: but there being remains found of the buildings constructed by the Mexicans in their migration, on the river Gila, and in Pimeria, and not in California, there is no reason to believe that they crossed the sea, but came by land to Culiacan.

such

such as earthen pots, dishes, and jars, and little looking-glasses of the stone Itztli (*f*).

From hence, traversing the steep mountains of Tarahumara, and directing their course towards the south, they reached Huiccolhuacan, at present called Culiacan, a place situated on the gulf of California, in  $24\frac{1}{2}$  deg. of latitude, where they stopped three years (*g*). Here it is probable, that they built houses and cottages to dwell in, and sowed such seeds for their food as they carried with them, and usually did in every place where they stayed any considerable time. There they formed a statue of wood representing Huitzilopochtli the tutelar deity of the nation, that he might accompany them in their travel, and made a chair of reeds and rushes to transport it which they called *Teoicpalli*, or chair of God. They chose priests who were to carry him on their shoulders, four at a time, to whom they gave the name of *Teotlamacazque*, or servants of God, and the act itself of carrying him was called *Teomama*, that is to carry God on one's back.

From Huiccolhuacan journeying for many days towards the east, they came to Chicomoztoc, where they stopped. Hitherto all the seven tribes had travelled in a body together: but here they separated, and the Xochimilcas, the Tepanecas, the Chalchese, the Tlahuicas, and the Tlascalans proceeding onwards, left the Mexicans there with their idol. Those nations say the separation was made by express command of their God. There is little doubt that some disagreement among themselves was the occasion of it. The situation of Chicomoztoc, where the Mexicans sojourned nine years, is not known; but it appears to be that place twenty miles distant from the city of Zacatecas towards the south where there are still some remains of an immense edifice, which, according to the tradition of the Zacatecas, the ancient inhabitants of that country, was the work of the Aztecas in their

(*f*) These are the reports I received from two persons who had seen the *Cafe grandi*. We should wish to have a plan of their form and dimensions; but now it would be very difficult to be obtained, the whole of that country being depopulated by the furious incursions of the Apaches and other barbarous nations.

(*g*) The stay of the Aztecas in Huiccolhuacan, is agreeable to the testimony of all historians, as well as their separation at Chicomoztoc. There is a tradition among the northern people of their passage through Tarahumara. Near to Naiarit there are trenches found which were made by the Cori, to defend themselves from the Mexicans in their route from Huiccolhuacan to Chicomoztoc.



BOOK II. migration; and it certainly cannot be ascribed to any other people; the Zapatecas themselves being so barbarous as neither to live in houses nor to know how to build them. Their being reduced to a smaller number by the dismemberment of the other tribes, may probably have been the reason that the Mexicans undertook no other buildings of that kind in their peregrination. Proceeding from the country of the Zacatecas towards the south, through Amica, Cocula, and Zayula, they descended into the maritime province of Colima, and from thence to Zacatula; where turning to the eastward, they ascended to Malinalco, a place situated in the mountains which surround the valley of Toluca (*b*), and afterwards taking their course towards the north, in the year 1196 they arrived at the celebrated city of Tula (*i*).

In their journey from Chicomoztoc to Tula, they stopped a while in Coatlicomac, where the tribe was divided into two factions, which became perpetual rivals, and alternately persecuted each other. This discord was occasioned, as they say, by two bundles which miraculously appeared in the midst of their camp. Some of them advancing to the first bundle to examine it, found in it a precious stone, on which a great contest arose, each claiming to possess it as a present from their god. Going afterwards to open the other bundle they found nothing but two pieces of wood. At first sight they undervalued them as things which were useless, but being made acquainted, by the wife Huitziton, of the service they could be of in producing fire, they prized them more than the precious stone. They who appropriated to themselves the gem were those, who, after the foundation of Mexico called themselves Tlatelolcas, from the place which they settled near to that city; they who took the pieces of wood were those who in future bore the name of Mexicans, or *Tenochcas*. This account however cannot be considered in any other light than as a moral fable, to

(*b*) It is evident from the manuscripts of P. Giovanni Tobar, a Jesuit exceedingly versed in the antiquities of those nations, that the Mexicans passed through Michuacan, and this could only be by Colima and Zacatula, which probably then belonged to the kingdom, as they now belong to the ecclesiastical diocese of Michuacan; because if they had performed their journey any other way to Tula, they would not have touched at Malinalco.

(*i*) The epoch of the arrival of the Mexicans at Tula in 1196, is confirmed by a manuscript history in Mexican, cited by Boturini, and in this point of chronology other authors agree.

teach that in all things the useful is preferable to the beautiful. Notwithstanding this dissention both parties travelled always together for their imaginary interest in the protection of their god (*k*).

It ought not to excite wonder that the Aztecas made so great a circuit, and journeyed upwards of a thousand miles more than was necessary, to reach Anahuac: as they had no limits prescribed to their travel, and were in quest of a country where they might enjoy all the conveniences of life: neither is it surprising that in some places they erected large fabrics, as it is probable, they considered every place where they stopped the boundary of their peregrination. Several situations appeared to them at first, proper for their establishment, which they afterwards abandoned, from experience of inconveniences they had not foreseen. Wherever they stopped they raised an altar to their God, and at their departure left all their sick behind; and, probably, some others, who were to take care of them, and perhaps also, some who might be tired of such long pilgrimages, and unwilling to encounter fresh fatigues.

In Tula they stopped nine years, and afterwards eleven years in other places not far distant, until, in 1216, they arrived at Zumpanco, a considerable city in the vale of Mexico. Tochpanecatl, lord of this city, received them with singular humanity, and not contenting himself with granting them commodious dwellings, and regaling them plentifully; but becoming attached to them from long and familiar intercourse, he demanded from the chiefs of the nation, some noble virgin for a wife to his son Ilhuitcatl. The Mexicans obliged by such proofs of regard presented Tlacapantzin to him, who was soon after married to that illustrious youth; and from them, as will appear, the Mexican kings descended.

After remaining seven years in Zumpanco, they went together with the youth Ilhuicatl to Tizayocan, a city a little distant from it, where Tlacapantzin bore a son, named after *Huitzilicuitl*, and at the same time they gave away another virgin to *Xochiatzin*, lord of Quauhtitlan. From Tizayecan they passed to Tolpetlac and Tepeyacac, where, at present,

(*k*) It is not to be doubted that the story of the packets is merely a fable; as the Aztecas knew, some centuries before, how to produce fire from two pieces of wood, by friction.



## BOOK II.

lies the village and renowned sanctuary of the Holy Virgin of Guadalupe, places all situated on the borders of the lake of Tezcucó, and near the site of Mexico, in which they continued for twenty-two years.

As soon as the Mexicans appeared in that country, they were reviewed by order of Xolotl then reigning; who, having nothing to fear, permitted them to establish themselves wherever they could: but those in Tepeyacac finding themselves harraßed by *Tenancacaltzin*, a Chechemecan lord, they were forced, in 1245, to retire to Chapoltepec, a mountain situated on the western border of the lake, hardly two miles distant from the site of Mexico, in the reign of Nopaltzin, and not of Quinatzin, as Torquemada and Boturini imagine (1).

The persecutions which they suffered in this place from some lords, and particularly from the lord of Xaltocan, made them, at the end of seventeen years, abandon it, to seek a more secure asylum in *Acocolco*, which consists of a number of small islands at the southern extremity of the lake. There for the space of fifty-two years they led the most miserable life; they subsisted on fish, and all sorts of insects, and the roots of the marshes, and covered themselves with the leaves of the amoxтли which grows plentifully in that lake, having wore out all their garments, and finding no means there of supplying themselves with others. Their habitations were wretched huts, made of the reeds and rushes which the lake produced. It would be totally incredible that for so many years they were able to keep in existence in a place so disadvantageous, where they were so stinted in the necessities of life, was it not verified by their historians and succeeding events.

SECT.  
XVIII.  
Slavery of the  
Mexicans in  
Colhuacan.

But in the midst of their miseries they were free, and liberty alleviated in some degree their distresses. In 1314, however, slavery was added to their other distresses. Historians differ in opinion concerning this event. Some say, that the petty king of Colhuacan, a city not far distant from Acocolco, not willing to suffer the Mexicans to maintain themselves in his territories without paying him tribute, made open war upon them, and having subdued, enslaved them.

(1) Quinatzin supposing to have been reigning at that time, the reign of him and his successor must have comprehended a space of an hundred and sixty-one years and upwards; if the chronology of Torquemada is adopted, who supposes Quinatzin reigning until the time at which the Mexicans entered the vale of Mexico. See our Dissertations,

Others

Others affirm, that this petty king sent an embassy to them, to inform them that having compassion for the miserable life which they led in those islands, he was willing to grant them a better place where they might live more comfortably; and that the Mexicans, who wished for nothing more ardently, accepted instantly the favour, and gladly quitted their disagreeable situation; but they had scarcely set out when they were attacked by the Colhuas and taken prisoners. Which ever way it was, it is certain, that the Mexicans were carried slaves to Tizapan, a place belonging to the state of Colhuacan.

After some years slavery, a war arose between the Colhuas and Xochimilcas their neighbours, with such disadvantage to the former, that they were worsted in every engagement. The Colhuas, being afflicted with these repeated losses, were forced to employ their prisoners whom they ordered to prepare for war; but they did not provide them with the necessary arms, either because these had been exhausted in preceding battles, or because they left them at liberty to accoutre themselves as they chose. The Mexicans being persuaded that this was a favourable occasion to win the favour of their lord, resolved to exert every effort of their bravery. They armed themselves with long stout staves, the points of which they hardened in the fire, not only to be used against the enemy, but to assist them in leaping from one bush to another if it should prove necessary, as, in fact, they had to combat in the water. They made themselves knives of itzli, and targets or shields of reeds wove together. It was agreed among them, that they were not to employ themselves as it was usual in making prisoners, but to content themselves with cutting off an ear, and leaving the enemy without further hurt. With this disposition they went out to battle, and while the Colhuas and Xochimilcas were engaged, either by land on the borders of the lake, or by water in their ships, the Mexicans rushed furiously on the enemy, assisted by their staves in the water; cut off the ears of those whom they encountered, and put them in a basket which they carried for that purpose; but when they could not effect this from the struggles of the enemy, they killed them. By the assistance of the Mexicans, the Colhuas obtained so complete a victory that the Xochimilcas not only abandoned the field,  
but



BOOK II. but afraid even to remain in their city, they took refuge in the mountains.

This action having ended with so much glory, according to the custom of those nations, the soldiers of the Colhuas presented themselves with their prisoners before their general; as the bravery of the soldiers was not estimated by the number of enemies which were left dead on the field, but of those who were made prisoners alive, and shewn to the general. It cannot be doubted, that this was a rational sentiment, and a practice conformable to humanity. If the prince can vindicate his rights, and repel force without killing his enemies, humanity demands that life should be preserved. If we are to take utility into our consideration, a slain enemy cannot hurt, neither can he serve us, but from a prisoner we may derive much advantage without receiving any harm. If we consider glory, it requires a greater effort to deprive an enemy solely of his liberty, than to wrest his life from him in the heat of contest. The Mexicans were likewise called upon to make the shew of their prisoners; but not having a single one to present, as the only four which they had taken were kept concealed for a particular purpose; they were reproached as a cowardly race by the general and the soldiers of the Colhuas. Then the Mexicans holding out their baskets full of ears, said, "Behold from the number of ears which we present, you may judge of the number of prisoners we might have brought if we had inclined; but we were unwilling to lose time in binding them that we might accelerate your victory." The Colhuas remained awed and abashed, and began to conceive apprehensions from the prudence as well as from the courage of their slaves.

The Mexicans having returned to the place of their residence which, as appears, was at that time Huitzolopochco, they erected an altar to their tutelary god; but being desirous at the dedication of it to make an offering of something precious they demanded something of their lord for that purpose. He sent them in disdain, in a dirty rag of coarse cloth, a vile dead bird, with certain filth about it, which was carried by the priests of the Colhuas, who having laid it upon the altar without any salutation, retired. Whatever indignation the Mexicans felt from so unworthy an insult, reserving their revenge for another occasion, instead of such filth they placed

placed upon the altar a knife of itzli, and an odoriferous herb. The day of consecration being arrived, the petty king of Colhua, and his nobility, failed not to be present, not to do honour to the festival, but to make a mockery of his slaves. The Mexicans began this function with a solemn dance, in which they appeared in their best garments, and while the bystanders were most fixed in attention, they brought out the four Xochimilca prisoners, whom they had till then kept concealed, and after having made them dance a little, they sacrificed them upon a stone, breaking their breast with the knife of itzli, and tearing out their heart, which, whilst yet warm and beating, they offered to their god.

This human sacrifice, the first of the kind which we know to have been made in that country, excited such horror in the Colhuas, that having returned instantly to Colhuacan, they determined to dismiss slaves who were so cruel, and might in future become destructive to the state; on which *Coxcox*, so was the petty king named, sent orders to them to depart immediately out of that district, and go wherever they might be most inclined. The Mexicans willingly accepted their discharge from slavery, and directing their course towards the north, came to *Acatzitzintlan*, a place situated between two lakes, named afterwards *Mexicaltzinco*, which name is almost the same with that of *Mexico*, and was given to it without doubt from the same motive, as we shall see shortly, which made them give it to their capital; but not finding in that situation the conveniencies they desired, or being inclined to remove farther from the Colhuas, they proceeded to *Iztacalco*, approaching still nearer to the site of Mexico. In *Iztacalco* they made a little mountain of paper, by which they probably represented Colhuacan (*m*), and spent a whole night in dancing around it, singing their victory over the Xochimilcas, and returning thanks to their god for having freed them from the yoke of the Colhuas.

After having sojourned two years in *Iztacalco*, they came at last to that situation on the lake where they were to found their city. There they found a nopal, or opuntia, growing in a stone, and over it

(*m*) The Mexicans represented Colhuacan in their pictures by the figure of a hunchbacked mountain, and the name has exactly that signification.



## BOOK II.

the foot of an eagle. On this account, they gave to the place, and afterwards to their city, the name of Tenochtitlan (*n*). All, or at least all the historians of Mexico, say, this was the precise mark given them by their oracle for the foundation of their city, and relate various events concerning it, which as they appear out of the course of nature, we have omitted as being fabulous, or at least uncertain.

SECT. XIX.  
Foundation  
of Mexico.

As soon as the Mexicans took possession of that place, they erected a temple for their god Huitzilopochtli. The consecration of that sanctuary, although miserable, was not made without the effusion of human blood; for a daring Mexican having gone out in quest of some animal for a sacrifice, he encountered with a Colhuan named Xomimitl; after a few words, the feelings of national enmity, excited them to blows; the Mexican was victor, and having bound his enemy carried him to his countrymen, who sacrificed him immediately, and with great jubilee presented his heart torn from his breast on the altar, exercising such cruelty not more for the bloody worship of that false divinity, than the gratification of their revenge upon the Colhuas. Around the sanctuary they began to build their wretched huts of reeds and rushes, being destitute at that time of other materials. Such was the beginning of the city of Tenochtitlan, which in future times was to become the court of a great empire, and the largest and most beautiful city of the new world. It was likewise called Mexico, the name that afterwards prevailed, which denomination being taken from the name of its tutelar god, signifies place of *Mexitli*, or *Huitzilopochtli*, as he had both these names (*o*).

The

(*n*) Several authors, both Spanish and of other nations, from ignorance of the Mexican language have altered this name; and in their books it is read Tenoxtitlan, Temislitan, Temihtitlan, &c.

(*o*) There is a great difference of opinion among authors respecting the etymology of the word Mexico. Some derive it from *Metzli*, *Moon*; because they saw the moon represented in that lake as the oracle had predicted. Other say, that *Mexico* means *upon the fountain*, from having found one of good water in that spot; but these two etymologies are too violent, and the first besides is ridiculous. I was once of opinion, that the name was *Mexicco*, which means *in the center of Maguei*, or trees of the Mexican aloe; but from the study of the history I have been undeceived, and am now positive that *Mexico* signifies the place of *Mexitli*, or *Huitzilopochtli*, that is, the Mars of the Mexicans, on account of the sanctuary there erected to him; so that *Mexico* with the Mexicans is entirely equivalent to *Fanum Martis* of the Romans; the Mexicans take away the final syllable *ili*, in the compounding of words of this kind. The *co* added

The foundation of Mexico happened in the year 2. *Calli*, corresponding with the year 1325 of the vulgar era, when Quinatzin, the Chechemeca, was reigning in that country: but by changing their situation, the Mexicans did not suddenly better their fortune; for being insulated in the middle of a lake, without lands to cultivate, or garments to cover them, and living in constant distrust of their neighbours, they led a life as miserable as it was in other places, where they had supported themselves solely on the animal and vegetable produce of the lake. But when urged by necessity, of what is not human industry capable? The greatest want which the Mexicans experienced was that of ground for their habitations, as the little island of Tenochtitlan was not sufficient for all its inhabitants. This they remedied a little by making palisades in those places where the water was shallowest, which they terraced with stones and turf, uniting to their principal island several other smaller ones at a little distance. To procure to themselves afterwards stone, wood, bread, and every thing necessary for their habitations, their clothing, and food, they applied themselves with the utmost assiduity to fishing, not only of white fish, of which we have already spoken, but also of other little fish and insects of the marshes which they made eatable, and to the catching of innumerable kinds of birds which flocked there to feed in the water. By instituting a traffick with this game in the other places situated on the borders of the lake, they obtained all they wanted.

But the gardens floating on the water which they made of the bushes and mud of the lake, the structure and form of which we shall elsewhere explain, discovered the greatest exertion of their industry; on these they sowed maize, pepper, chia, French beans, and gourds.

Thus the Mexicans passed the first thirteen years, giving as much order and form to their settlement as possible, and relieving their distresses by dint of industry: until this period, the whole tribe had continued united, notwithstanding the disagreement of the two factions which had formed themselves during their migration. This discord, which was transmitted from father to son, at last burst violently out in

added to it is the preposition *in*. The word *Mexicaltzinco*, means the place of the house or temple of the god *Mexitli*; so that Huitzilopochco, *Mexicaltzinco* and *Mexico*, the names of the three places successively inhabited by the Mexicans, mean the same thing in substance.



BOOK II. 1338. One of the factions not being longer able to endure the other, resolved to separate themselves; but not having it in their power to remove so far as their rage suggested, they went towards the North to reside on a little island at a small distance, which they named *Xaltitlco*, from finding a great heap of sand there, and afterwards, from a terrace which they made, *Tlatelolco*, a name which it still preserves (*p*). Those who established themselves on that small island, which was afterwards united to that of *Tenochtitlan*, had, at that time, the name of *Tlatelolcas*, and those who remained in the first situation called themselves *Tenochcas*; but we shall call them *Mexicans*, as all historians do.

A little before, or a little after this event, the *Mexicans* divided their miserable city into four quarters, assigning to each its tutelar god, besides the protecting god of the whole nation. This division subsists at present under the names of *St. Paul*, *St. Sebastian*, *St. John*, and *St. Mary* (*q*). In the centre of these quarters was the sanctuary of *Huitzilopochtli*, to whom they daily performed acts of adoration.

SECT. XXI.  
Another human sacrifice.

In honour of that false divinity at this period they made an abominable sacrifice which is not to be thought of without horror. They sent an embassy to the petty king of *Colhuacan*, requesting him to give them one of his daughters, that she might be consecrated mother of their protecting god, signifying that it was an express command of a god to exalt her to so high a dignity. The petty king enticed and infatuated by the glory which he would receive from the deification of his daughter, or intimidated by the disasters which might await him, if he refused the demand of a god, granted quickly all that was requested, especially as he could not well suspect what was to happen. The *Mexicans* conducted the noble damsel with great triumph to their city; but were scarcely arrived, as historians relate, when the demon commanded that she should be made a sacrifice, and after her death to be flayed; and that one of the bravest youths of the nation

(*p*) The ancients represented *Tlatelolco* in their pictures by the figure of a heap of sand. If this had been known by those who undertook the interpretation of the Mexican pictures, which were published with the letters of Cortes at Mexico, in 1770, they would not have called this place *Tlatilolco*, which name they have interpreted *oven*.

(*q*) The quarter of *St. Paul* was called by the *Mexicans* *Teopan* and *Xochimilca*; that of *St. Sebastian*, *Atzacualco*; that of *St. John*, *Moyotla*; and that of *St. Mary*, *Cucopopan* and *Tlaquichichcan*.

should

should be cloathed with her skin. Whether it was an order of the demon, or, what is more probable, a cruel pretence of the barbarous priests, all was punctally executed. The petty king, invited by the Mexicans to be present at the apotheosis of his daughter, went to be a spectator of that solemnity, and one of the worshippers of the new divinity. He was led into the sanctuary, where the youth stood upright by the side of the idol, clothed in the bloody skin of the victim; but the obscurity of the place did not permit him to discern what was before him. They gave him a censer in his hand, and a little copal to begin his worship; but having discovered, by the light of the flame which the copal made, the horrible spectacle, his anguish affected his whole frame, and being transported with the violent effects of it, he ran out crying with distraction, and ordered his people to take revenge of so barbarous a deed; but they dared not to undertake it, as they must instantly have been oppressed by the multitude; upon which the father returned inconsolable to his residence to bewail his disaster the remainder of his life. His unfortunate daughter was created goddess and honorary mother, not only of Huitzilopochtli, but of all their gods; which is the exact meaning of *Teteoinan*, by which name she was afterwards known and worshipped. Such were the specimens in this new city of that barbarous system of religion, which we shall hereafter explain.



## B O O K III.

*Foundation of the Mexican Monarchy: Events of the Mexicans under their four first Kings, until the Defeat of the Tepanecas and the Conquest of Azcapozalco. The Bravery and illustrious Actions of Montezuma Ilhuicamina. The Government and Death of Techotlalla, the fifth Chechemecan King. Revolutions in the Kingdom of Acolhuacan. Death of King Ixtlilxochitl, and the Tyrants Tezozomoc and Maxtlaton.*

## BOOK III.

SECT. I.  
Acamapitzin, first king  
of Mexico.

UNTIL the year 1352, the Mexican government was aristocratical, the whole nation paying obedience to a certain body, composed of persons the most respectable for their nobility and wisdom. The number of those who governed at the foundation of Mexico was twenty (*r*); among whom the chief in authority was *Tenoch*, as appears from their paintings. The very humble state in which they felt themselves, the inconveniencies they suffered from their neighbours, and the example of the Chechemecas, the Tepanecas, and the Colhuas, incited them to erect their little state into a monarchy, not doubting, that the royal authority would throw some splendor on the whole body of the nation; and flattering themselves that in their new chief they would have a father who would watch over the state, and a good general who would defend them from the insults of their enemies. The election fell, by common consent, on *Acamapitzin*, either from the acclamations of the people, or the votes of some electors, to whose judgment all were submissive; as was their mode afterwards.

Acamapitzin was one of the most famous and prudent persons then living amongst them. He was the son of *Opochtli*, a very noble Az-

(*r*) The twenty lords who then governed the nation were named *Tenoch*, *Atzin*, *Acacith*, *Abuexotl* or *Abuciotl*, *Ocelepan*, *Xomimith*, *Xiubeac*, *Avolobua*, *Nanacatzin*, *Quentzin*, *Tlalala*, *Tzontlyayauh*, *Cozcatl*, *Texcatl* *Techpan*, *Mimich*, *Tetepan*, *Tezacatl*, *Acolatl*, and *Abitomecatl*.

teca (s), and Atozotli, a princess of the royal family of Colhuacan (t). On the father's side, he took his descent from Tochpanecatli, that lord of Zumpanco, who so kindly received the Mexicans when they arrived at that city. He was yet unmarried; on which account they soon determined to demand a virgin of one of the first families of Anahuac, and for that purpose sent successive embassies to the lord of Tacuba, and the king of Azcapozalco; but by both their pretensions were rejected with disdain. Without despairing from so disgraceful a refusal, they made the same demand from *Acolmiztli*, lord of *Coatlican*, and a descendant of one of the three Acolhuan princes, requesting him to give them one of his daughters for their queen. Acolmiztli complied with their request, and gave them his daughter Ilancueitl, whom the Mexicans conducted triumphantly away and celebrated the nuptials with the utmost rejoicings.

The Tlatelolcos who, from being neighbours and rivals, were constantly observing what was done in Tenochtitlan, that they might vie with it in glory, and prevent their being in future oppressed by that power, also created themselves a king: but not esteeming it advantageous that he should be one of their own nation, they demanded of Azcapozalco, king of the Tepaneca nation, to which lord the site of Tlatelolco, as well as Mexico was subject, one of his sons, that he might rule over them as their monarch, and that they might obey him as vassals. The king gave them his son *Quaquauh-pitzahuac*, who was immediately crowned first king of Tlatelolco in 1353.

SECT. II.  
Quaquauh-  
pitzahuac I.  
king of Tla-  
telolco.


It is to be suspected that the Tlatelolcos, when they made such a demand from that king, had, with a view to flatter and incense him against their rivals, exaggerated the insolence of the Mexicans in creating a king without his permission; as in a few days after Azcapozalco assem-

(s) Some historians report, that Acamapitzin whom they suppose to have been born while in slavery at Colhuacan, was the son of old Huitzilihuitl; but this is not probable, as Huitzilihuitl, born while the Mexicans were in Tizayuca, was not less than ninety years of age when the Mexicans were made slaves; wherefore, Huitzilihuitl was not father, but certainly grandfather of Acamapitzin. Torquemada makes this king son of Cohuarzontli; but we adhere to the opinion of Siguenza, who has investigated the genealogy of the Mexican kings with more criticism and diligence than Torquemada.

(t) It is much to be wondered at that Opochtli should marry a virgin so illustrious, at a time when his nation was so reduced and degraded by slavery; but this marriage is ascertained by the pictures of the Mexicans and Colhuas, seen by the learned Siguenza.

bled



BOOK III.  bled his counsellors, and spoke to them in the following words :  
 “ What is your judgment, nobles of Tepaneca, of this act of the  
 “ Mexicans ? They have introduced themselves into our dominions,  
 “ and continue to increase very considerably their city and their com-  
 “ merce, and what is worse have had the audacity to create one of their  
 “ own nation a king, without waiting for our consent. If they pro-  
 “ ceed thus in the beginning of their establishment, what is to be ima-  
 “ gined they will do hereafter when they have increased their numbers  
 “ and added to their strength ? Is it not to be apprehended that in fu-  
 “ ture, instead of paying us the tribute which we have imposed on  
 “ them, they will pretend that we should pay it to them, and that the  
 “ petty king of the Mexicans will aim also at being monarch of the  
 “ Tepanecas ? I therefore consider it necessary to multiply their bur-  
 “ dens so much, that in labouring to discharge them they may be  
 “ worn out, or on failure of paying us, that we harass them with other  
 “ evils, and at last constrain them to abandon their state.”

SECT. III.  
 Taxes im-  
 posed on the  
 Mexicans.

All applauded the resolution ; nor was it otherwise to be expected ; as the prince who in council discovers his wish, rather looks for panegyrist to second his inclination, than counsellors to enlighten his understanding : the king then sent to inform the Mexicans, that the tribute which they had paid hitherto being too small, it was his pleasure that they should double it in future ; that they were besides to carry so many thousands of willow and fir-plants to be set in the roads and gardens of Azcapozalco, and to transport to the court a great kitchen garden, where all the vegetables known in Anahuac were sown and growing.

The Mexicans, who, until that time had paid no other tribute than a certain quantity of fish, and a certain number of water-birds, were greatly distressed with these new grievances, fearing that they might constantly be increasing : but they performed all that was enjoined them, carrying at the appointed time along with their fish and fowl, the willows and floating garden. Whoever has not seen these most beautiful gardens, which in our time were cultivated in the middle of the water, and transported with ease wherever they desired, will not without difficulty be persuaded of the truth of such an event : but whoever has seen them as we have, and all who have sailed upon that lake, where

the senses receive the most delightful recreation, will have no reason to doubt of the authenticity of this history. Having obtained this tribute from them, the king ordered them to bring him the next year another garden, with a duck and a swan in it, both sitting on their eggs; but so, as that on their arrival at Azcapozalco, the brood might be ready to hatch. The Mexicans obeyed, and took their measures so well, that the foolish prince had the pleasure of seeing the chickens come out of the eggs. They were ordered the succeeding year to bring, besides a garden of this kind, a live stag: this new order was the more difficult to execute, as it was necessary to go to the mountains on the continent to hunt the stag, where they were in danger of engaging with their enemies; it was, however, accomplished, that they might escape from wrongs more oppressive. This hard subjection of the Mexicans lasted not less than fifty years. The historians of Mexico affirm, that the Mexicans in all their afflictions implored the protection of their god, who rendered the execution of such orders easy to them: but we are of a different opinion.

The poor king Acamapitzin, in addition to these disgusts, experienced the sterility of his queen Ilancueitl, and therefore married *Texcatlamiabuatl*, daughter of the lord of Tetepanci, by whom he had several sons, and among others Huitzilihuitl and Chimalpopoca, successors to him in the crown. He took this second wife without abandoning the first; they both lived in such harmony together that Ilancueitl charged herself with the education of Huitzilihuitl. He had other wives, although not honoured with the rank of queens; and among the rest, a slave, who bore *Itzcoatl*, one of the best and most renowned among the kings of Anahuac. Acamapitzin governed his city in peace, for thirty-seven years; his city, at that time, comprehending the whole of his kingdom. In his time population increased, buildings of stone were erected, and those canals which served as well for the ornament of the city as for the convenience of the citizens, were begun. The interpreter of Mendoza's collection ascribes to this king, the conquest of Mizquic, Cintlahuac, Quauhnhuac, and Xochimilco: but is it possible to believe that the Mexicans would undertake the conquest of four such great cities, at a time when they had difficulty to preserve their own territory. The picture, therefore, in that collection,



## BOOK III.

representing those four cities subdued by the Mexicans, must be understood to apply to the Mexicans, only as they were auxiliaries to other states, in the same manner, as a short time afterwards they served the king of Tezcuco against the Xaltocanese.

A little before his death, Acamapitzin called together the great men of the city; when after exhorting them to maintain their zeal for the public good, recommending to them the care of his wives and children; and declaring the pain it gave him at his death, to think of leaving his people tributary to the Tepanecas, he said, that, having received the crown from their hands, he put it into their hands again, in order that they might bestow it upon him who they thought would do the state most service. His death, which happened in the year 1389, was greatly lamented by the Mexicans, and his funeral was celebrated with as much magnificence as the poverty of the nation would admit.

From the death of Acamapitzin, until the election of a new king, as we are informed by Siguenza, an interregnum took place, of four months; a circumstance which never happened again, as from that time forward the new king was always chosen a very few days after the death of the preceding. Perhaps the election, at this time, might be retarded, by the nobles being employed in regulating the number of the electors, and in settling the ceremony of the coronation which was then beginning to be observed.

The electors then, chosen by the nobles, being assembled together, the oldest man among them addressed them in this manner. “ My age  
 “ emboldens me to speak first. The misfortune, O Mexican nobles,  
 “ which we have suffered by the death of our king, is very great; and  
 “ none ought to feel it more than we who were the feathers of his  
 “ wings, and the eye-lids of his eyes. Such a misfortune is still in-  
 “ creased, by the unhappy condition of dependence upon the power of  
 “ the Tepanecas, under which we live, to the reproach of the Mexi-  
 “ can name. Do you, then, whom it so much concerns to find a re-  
 “ medy for our present distresses, do you resolve to choose a king who  
 “ shall be zealous for the honour of our mighty god Huitzilopochtli,  
 “ who shall avenge, with his arm, the injuries done to our nation;  
 “ and who shall take the aged, the widow, and the orphan under the  
 “ shade

## BOOK III.

SECT. IV.  
Huitzilihuitl  
second king  
of Mexico.

“shade of his clemency.” At the conclusion of this speech the electors gave their votes, and their choice fell upon Huitzilihuitl, son of the deceased king Acamapitzin. Then they proceeded, in regular order, to the house of the elected person, whom they placed in the middle of them, and conducted to the *Tlatocaicpalli*, that is the royal seat or throne; upon which they seated him; and after anointing him in the manner we shall describe in another place, they then placed upon his head the *Copilli* or crown, and made him their submissions one by one. Then one of the most considerable persons raised his voice, and thus addressed the king. “Be not discouraged, excellent youth, at receiving that new employment, to which you are called, of reigning over a nation which is inclosed among the reeds and rushes of this lake. It is, indeed, unfortunate to possess so small a kingdom within another’s territory, and to be the chief of a people, who, originally free, have now become tributary to the Tepanecas; but be comforted, and remember that we are under the protection of the great god Huitzilopochtli, whose image you are, and whose place you fill. The dignity to which you have been raised by him, should serve, not as an excuse for indolence and effeminacy, but as a spur to exertion. Have ever before your eyes the illustrious example of your great father, who spared no labour in the service of the public. We should wish, sir, to make you presents worthy of your station; but since our situation will not admit of it, be pleased to accept our promises of the most inviolable attachment and fidelity.”

Huitzilihuitl was not yet married when he ascended the throne: but it was thought proper that he should take a wife, and the nobles wished for a daughter of the king of Azcapozalco. To avoid, however, so ignominious a denial as they met with in the time of Acamapitzin, they resolved to make the request, upon this occasion, with the greatest demonstrations of humility and respect. Some of the nobles, therefore, went to Azcapozalco, and falling on their knees, when they were presented to the king, they declared their wishes, in the following words, “Behold, great lord, the poor Mexicans at your feet, humbly expecting from your goodness, a favour which is greatly beyond their merit; but to whom ought we to have recourse, except to you, who are our father and our lord. Behold us hanging upon your



BOOK III. " lips, and waiting only your signals to obey. We beseech you, with  
 " the most profound respect, to take compassion upon our master and  
 " your servant Huitzilihuitl, confined among the thick rushes of the  
 " lake. He is without a wife, and we without a queen. Vouchsafe,  
 " sir, to part with one of your jewels, or most precious feathers.  
 " Give us one of your daughters, who may come to reign over us in  
 " a country which belongs to you."

These expressions, which are peculiarly elegant in the Mexican language, so softened the mind of *Texozomoc* (for that was the king's name), that he instantly granted his daughter *Ajaubcibuatl*, to the great joy of the Mexicans, who conducted her in triumph to Mexico, where the much wished-for marriage was celebrated, with the usual ceremony of tying together the skirts of the garments of the husband and wife. By this princess the king had a son the first year, who was named *Acolnahuacatl*; but being desirous to strengthen his kingdom by new alliances, he sought and obtained from the prince of Quauhnahuac, one of his daughters called *Miabuxochitl*, by whom he had Motezuma *Ilbuicamina*, the most celebrated of the Mexican kings.

SECT. V.  
 Techotlala,  
 king of Acol-  
 huacan.

At that time, in Acolhuacan, reigned *Techotlala*, son of king Quimat-  
 zin. The first thirty years of his reign were peaceful; but afterwards  
*Tzompan*, prince of Xaltocan, revolted, and finding his own force insuf-  
 ficient to oppose his sovereign, he called to his assistance the states of  
 Otompan, Meztitlan, Quahuacan, Tecomic, Quauhtitlan, and Tepozotlan.  
 The king promised him pardon, provided he would lay down his arms  
 and submit; which clemency probably proceeded from respect to the  
 noble extraction of the rebel, who was the last descendant of Chicon-  
 quauhtli, one of the three Acolhuan princes. But *Tzompan* confid-  
 ing in the number of his troops, rejected the offer with contempt;  
 when the king sent an army against him, which was joined by the  
 Mexicans and Tepanecas, whose service he had demanded. The war  
 was obstinate, and lasted for two months: but at length, victory de-  
 claring for the king, *Tzompan*, with all the chiefs of the revolted cities,  
 was put to death; and in him was extinguished the illustrious race of  
 Chiconquauhtli. This war, in which the Mexicans served as auxili-  
 aries to the king of Acolhuacan against Xaltocan and the other confe-  
 derated states, is represented in the third picture of Mendoza's collec-  
 tion :

tion: but the interpreter of those pictures was mistaken when he imagined that those cities were subjected to the Mexican crown.

After the end of the war the Mexicans returned to their city with glory; and Techotlala, in order to prevent other rebellions in future, divided his kingdom into seventy-five states, giving each a chief to govern them in subordination to the crown. In each of them he likewise placed a certain number of the inhabitants of some other state; expecting that the natives would be more easily kept in subjection by means of strangers who depended upon a foreign power; a policy which might, indeed, be useful in preventing rebellion, but which was very oppressive to the innocent subjects, and created much trouble to the chiefs who were entrusted with the government. At the same time, he conferred honourable offices upon many of the nobles. He made *Tetlato* general of his armies, *Yolqui* entertainer and introducer of ambassadors, *Tlami* major-domo of the royal palace, *Amechichi* overseer of the cleaning of the royal houses, and *Cobuatl* director of the gold workers of Ocolco. No person worked in gold or silver, for the use of the king, except the directors own children, who had learnt the art for that purpose. The entertainer of ambassadors had many Colhuan officers under him; the major-domo had a certain number of Chechemecas; and the superintendant of the cleaning of the houses, an equal number of Tepanecas. By such regulations he increased the splendor of his court, and strengthened the throne of Acolhuacan; although he could not hinder those revolutions which we shall soon have occasion to mention. These and other such instances of wise policy, which will appear in the sequel of this history, evidently shew the injustice done to the Americans by those who have considered them as animals of a different species, or as incapable of civilization or improvement.

The new alliance formed by the king of Mexico with the king of Azcapozalco, and the glory acquired by his subjects in the war of Xaltocan, served both to strengthen their little state and to make themselves more respectable in the eyes of their neighbours. Being enabled, therefore, to extend their trade and carry it on with greater freedom, they began, now, to wear cloaths made of cotton, which they had been entirely without, in their former state of indigence, when they had nothing but coarse stuffs made of the threads of the wild palm. But  
they



## BOOK III.

SECT. VI.  
Enmity of  
Maxtlaton  
to the Mexi-  
cans.

they had scarcely time to breathe, when a new enemy and bloody persecutor started up, in the same royal family of Azcapazalco.

*Maxtlaton* prince of Coyoacan, and son of the king of Azcapozalco, a cruel, turbulent, ambitious man, and who was feared even by his father upon that account, had been displeased at the marriage of his sister *Ayauhcihuatl* with the king of Mexico. He concealed his displeasure, for some time, out of respect to his father; but in the tenth year of the reign of *Huitzilihuitl*, he went to Azcapozalco, and assembled the nobility, in order to lay before them his complaints against the Mexicans and their king. He represented the increase of the population of Mexico; enlarged upon the pride and arrogance of that people, and upon the fatal effects which were to be feared from their present dispositions; and especially complained of the great affront done to him by the Mexican king, in depriving him of his wife. It is necessary to observe, that *Maxtlaton* and *Ayauhcihuatl*, although both children of *Tezozomoc*, were yet born of different mothers; and perhaps such marriages were in those times, permitted among the *Tepanecas*. Whether he ever actually intended to marry his sister; or only made that a pretext to cover his cruel designs, is uncertain; but, in the assembly of the nobles, it was determined to summon *Huitzilihuitl*, to answer to the pretended charge. The Mexican king went to Azcapozalco; nor will this appear extraordinary, when we consider that it was no uncommon thing, at that time, for princes to visit one another; and that, besides, it was the duty of *Huitzilihuitl*, as a feudatory of that crown; for, although from the birth of *Acolnahuacatl*, the queen of Mexico had prevailed upon her father *Tezozomac* to relieve the Mexicans from the oppressions to which they had been subjected for so many years before, yet Mexico still continued in the nature of a fief of Azcapozalco, and the Mexicans owed the *Tepanecan* king an annual present of a couple of ducks by way of acknowledgement of his superiority.

*Maxtlaton* received *Huitzilihuitl* in a hall of the palace, and after having dined with him in the presence of the courtiers who flattered all his schemes, he charged *Huitzilihuitl* in the severest terms, with the pretended outrage done to him by the marriage of *Ayauhcihuatl*. The Mexican king with the greatest respect asserted his innocence, and said, that he certainly would never have solicited the princess, nor her  
father

father have given her away to him, if she had been betrothed to another. But in spite of the truth of his justification and the weight of his reasons, Maxtlaton angrily replied, "I might now, without hearing more, put you to instant death, and so punish your boldness and avenge my own honour; but I would not have it said that a Tepanecan prince killed his enemy in a treacherous manner. Depart in peace; and time will give me an opportunity of taking a more honourable revenge."

The Mexican went from him, filled with rage and vexation, and was not long without feeling the effects of his cruel kinsman's displeasure. The true cause of Maxtlaton's enmity arose from his fear of the crown of the Tepanecas one day coming to his nephew Acolnahuacatl, by which event his nation would become subject to the Mexicans. To remove the cause of his fear, he formed the barbarous resolution of putting his nephew to death, who was accordingly murdered a short time after by some persons who hoped, by that act of cruelty, to gain the favour of their master; no prince ever wanting, about him, mercenary men, who are ready to serve his passions (s). Tezozomoc gave no consent to the perpetration of this crime, but we do not know that he shewed any disapprobation of it. In the sequel of this history we shall see that the haughtiness, the ambition, and the cruelty of Maxtlaton rather encouraged than connived at by his indulgent father, brought ruin upon himself and his kingdom. Huitzilihuitl could ill brook such a barbarous injury; but he yet wanted sufficient power to take revenge.

In the same year with this tragical event (1399) died at Tlatelolco, the first king, Quaquauhpitzaahuac, leaving his subjects much more civilized, and the city greatly enlarged by handsome buildings and gardens. He was succeeded by *Tlacatcotl*, of whose origin historians differ widely in their relations; some imagining he was a Tepanecan as well as his predecessor, while others take him to have been an Acol-

SECT. VII.  
Tlacatcotl,  
second king  
of Tlatelol-  
co.

(s) There is no author who gives any account of the circumstances of this murder; and it is hardly to be conceived how the Tepanecas should be able to execute such a deed in Mexico; but we cannot doubt of the fact, as it is confirmed by all the national historians; but father Acosta has committed a mistake in confounding the murder of this young prince Acolnahuacatl, with the death of Chimalpopoca the third king of Mexico.



## BOOK III.

huan, appointed by the king of Acolhuacan. The rivalry which subsisted between the Mexicans and Tlatelolcas contributed greatly to the aggrandizement of their respective cities. The Mexicans had formed so many alliances, by marriage, with the neighbouring nations; had so greatly improved their agriculture, and increased the number of their floating gardens upon the lake; and had built so many more vessels to supply their extended commerce and fishing, that they were enabled to celebrate their secular year 1. *Tochtli*, which answers to the year 1402 of our era, with greater magnificence than any of the four which had elapsed since their first leaving of the country of Aztlan.

At this time Techotlala, far advanced in years, still reigned in Acolhuacan; who perceiving his end approach, called to him his son and successor Ixtlilxochitl, and, among many instructions, particularly recommended to him the conciliating of the minds of his feudatory lords; lest the crafty and ambitious Tezozomoc, who, till that time, had only been restrained by the uncertainty of success, should attempt any thing against the empire. Nor were the fears of Techotlala without foundation, as will appear from the sequel. He died, at last, in the year 1406, after a very long reign, though not quite so long as some authors have imagined (*t*).

SECT. VIII.  
Ixtlilxochitl,  
king of Acol-  
huacan.

After the funeral rites were performed with the usual solemnity, and the attendance of the princes and lords, the feudatories of the crown, they proceeded to celebrate the accession of Ixtlilxochitl. Among the princes was the king of Azcapozalco; who, by his conduct, soon justified the suspicions entertained of him by the deceased Techotlala; as, without making the usual submissions to the new king, he set out for his own state with an intention to stir up the other feudatories to rebellion against the empire. He called together the kings of Mexico and Tlatelolco, and told them, that Techotlala, who had so long tyrannized over that country, being dead, his purpose was to procure freedom to the princes, so that each might rule his own state with entire independence upon the king of Acolhuacan: but in order to ob-

(*t*) Torquemada and Betancourt give one hundred and four years to the reign of Techotlala; and although it is not impossible that a prince should reign so long, yet it is extremely improbable, and would require the strongest evidence to authenticate it; especially if we consider the general absurdity of their chronology. But see our Dissertations.

tain so glorious an object, he needed their assistance; and, upon their spirit, so well known among all the nations, he relied for their taking part with him in the great enterprise. He added, that in order to strike their blow with the greater security, he would undertake to unite in their confederacy some other princes whom he knew to be animated with the same designs. The two kings, either through fear of the great power of Tezozomoc, or to increase the reputation of their arms, engaged to assist him with their troops, as did also the other chiefs whom he solicited.

In the mean time Ixtlixochitl was employed in putting the affairs of his court into order, and in gaining the minds of his subjects; but he soon discovered, to his great disappointment, that already many had withdrawn themselves from their obedience to him, in order to place themselves under the command of the perfidious Tezozomoc. To oppose the progress of the enemy, he commanded the princes of Coatlichan, Huexotla, and some other neighbouring states, to arm all the troops they could without delay. The king himself wished to lead his army in person, but he was dissuaded from it by some of his courtiers, who represented the necessity of his presence at the court, lest in the distraction of affairs, some concealed enemy, or friend of wavering fidelity should be tempted, by the opportunity of his absence, to make himself master of the capital, and drive the king from his throne. *Tochinteuçtli*, son of the prince of Coatlichan, was made general of the army, and in case of his death, or any other accident, *Quauhxilotl*, prince of Iztapallocan was appointed to succeed him. The plain of Quauh-titlan, fifteen miles north of Azcapozalco, was chosen for the theatre of the war. The troops of the rebels were more numerous, but those of the king better disciplined. The royal army, before it set out for Quauh-titlan, ravaged six of the revolted states, in order both to weaken the enemy, and to leave behind them none who should be able to do them much injury. The war was supported with great obstinacy; the superior discipline of the Tezcucans being counteracted by the superiority of numbers on the side of the Tepanecas, who would certainly have been quickly overcome if they had not been constantly supplied with fresh troops. The allies of the rebels frequently sent out large bodies to make incursions in the loyal states, where they met with little



## BOOK III.

resistance as the greatest part of the Tezcucan force was collected at Quauhtitlan. Among the various disasters which they occasioned, the lord of Iztapallocan Quauhxiotl was slain, who died with glory in defence of his city after his return from the field of Quauhtitlan. The king of Acolhuacan saw himself obliged, now, to divide his forces, and appointed a considerable part of the people, who came from many distant places to his assistance, for the garrison of the cities. Tezozomoc perceiving in place of the advantages which he had promised himself, that his troops daily diminished, and that his people were become impatient of the fatigues and dangers of war after three years of continued action, demanded peace, designing to finish, by secret treachery, what he had begun by open violence. The king of Acolhuacan, although he could not rely on the faith of the Tepanecan prince, nevertheless, consented without insisting on any conditions which might give him security for the future, as his troops were as much broken with fatigue as those of his enemy.

SECT. IX.  
Chimalpopo-  
ca third king  
of Mexico.

Just as the war was concluded, or a little before its termination, after a reign of twenty years, in 1409, Huitzilihuitl died, having published some laws useful to the state, and leaving the nobility in possession of their right to chuse a successor. Chimalpopoca, who was his brother, was accordingly chosen, and by what appears, from thence it became the established law to make the election of one of the brothers of the deceased king, and on failure of brothers, of one of his grandsons. This law was constantly observed until the fall of the Mexican empire.

While Chimalpopoca found means to fix himself securely on the throne of Mexico, Ixtlixochitl begun to totter on that of Acolhuacan. The peace which Tezozomoc had demanded was a mere artifice to lull suspicion while he was more effectually pursuing his negotiations. The number of his party was daily observed to increase, while that of the Tezcucan diminished. This unfortunate king found himself reduced to such extremity, that thinking himself insecure in his own court, he went wandering through the neighbouring mountains escorted by a small army, and accompanied by the lords of Huexotla and Coatlichan, who were always faithful to him. The Tepanecas, that they might distress him to the utmost, intercepted the provisions which were carrying to his camp; by which his necessities became so great that he was compelled

compelled at last to beg provisions of his enemies. So easy is it to fall from the height of human felicity to the lowest state of misery.

He sent one of his grandsons named *Cehuacuecuenotzin*, to Otompan, one of the rebel states, to request the citizens of it to supply their king with the provisions he stood in need of, and to admonish them to abandon the party of the rebels, and to call to their minds the loyalty they had sworn. *Cehuacuecuenotzin*, well knew the danger of the undertaking; but fear being overcome by the generosity of his sentiments, his fortitude of mind, and fidelity to his sovereign, he shewed himself ready to obey: "I go my lord," he said, "to execute your commands, and to sacrifice my life to the obedience which I owe you. You cannot be insensible how much the Otompanese are alienated from you by espousing the part of your enemy. The whole country is occupied by the Tepanecas, and every where dangerous; my return is uncertain. But should I perish in your service, and if the sacrifice which I make you of my life is worthy of any recompence, I pray you to protect the two young children I leave behind." These words, which were accompanied with strong marks of feeling, touched the king's heart, who, in taking leave of him, said, "May our God accompany and return you safe. Alas! perhaps at your return, you may find what you fear for yourself, will have happened to me, the enemies being so numerous who conspire against my life." *Cihuacuecuenotzin* proceeded without delay to Otompan, but before he entered he knew that there were, at that time, Tepanecas in the city, who were sent by Tezozomoc, to publish a proclamation; he was not, however, discouraged, but went intrepidly to the public place where the Tepanecas had assembled the people to hear the proclamation, and after having saluted them all graciously, he freely communicated his embassy.

The Otompanese made a jest of him and his demand, but none of them dared to proceed farther, until a mean person among them threw a stone at him, exciting others at the same time to put him to death. The Tepanecas, who continued still and silent, to observe what resolution the Otompanese would take, perceiving now that they openly declared against the king of Acolhuacan, and his ambassador, cried out, Kill, kill, the traitor! accompanying their cries with throwing of stones.



**BOOK III.** Cihuacuecuenotzin, at first, faced his enemies, but seeing himself overpowered by numbers, and endeavouring to save himself by flight, was killed by a shower of stones. A character intitled to a better fate! an example of fidelity most worthy to be recorded, which had the hero been Grecian or Roman, in place of American, would have been the subject of praise of both historians and poets.

The Tepanecas became vain-glorious, of an act equally contrary to humanity and the rights of nations; and protested to the multitude the great pleasure they would have in being able to inform their chief, from being eye-witnesses, of the inviolable fidelity of the Otompanese. They also declared, they had been sent expressly to intimate an order not to give assistance to the king of Tezcucuo, under pain of proscription, and to exhort them to take arms against that king, and in defence of their liberty. The lord of Otompan, and the heads of the nobility replied, they would willingly obey the order of the king of Azcapozalco, and offered to do every thing in their power to second his intentions.

They gave speedy intelligence of this event to the lord of Acolman, who was the son of Tezozomoc, and communicated it to his father: he believing it now time to put his designs in execution, sent for the lords of Otompan and Chalco, on whose fidelity he chiefly relied, and whose states were most conveniently situated for his purpose, and charged them to levy, with all possible secrecy, a sufficient army, and lay themselves in ambuscade in a mountain near to the camp of the Tescucan king; that from thence they should send two of the most brave and able captains to the royal camp, who, under pretence of imparting some very important secret to the king, should artfully lead him to as great a distance as possible from his people, and then without delay or hesitation to murder him. Every thing happened as the wicked prince had designed. The king then chanced to be in the neighbourhood of Tlascala, and entertaining no suspicion of the two captains who came to him, fell unwarily into the snare. The deed was done at some little distance, but yet in sight of the royal army. They ran up immediately to chastise the temerity of those two desperate captains, but the army of the conspirators advancing, which was more numerous, they were quickly defeated. The royal corpse was with difficulty saved, to pay  
it

SECT. XI.  
Tragical  
death of Ixt-  
lixochitl.

it funeral honours, and the heir of the crown, who was a witness of the tragic end of his father, was obliged to hide himself in the bushes to escape the fury of his enemies. Thus did the unfortunate king Ixtlilxochitl end his life in 1410, after a reign of seven years.

He left several sons, and among them *Nezahualcojotl*, heir to the throne, whom he had by *Matlalcibuatzin*, daughter of Acamapitzin, king of Mexico (*t*). This prince was endued with a great genius, and an unparalleled magnanimity, and pre-eminently deserving of the throne of Acolhuacan; but he was not able from the superiority of Tezozomoc, to put himself in possession of the throne which was due to him by so many titles, until many years had elapsed, and many dangers and obstacles to it were surmounted.

The perfidious Tezozomoc had prepared great bodies of troops, that when the premeditated blow on the person of the king should succeed, they might pour down upon the cities of Tezcuco, Huexotla, Coatlichan, Coatepec, and Iztapallocan, which had been the most faithful to their lord, and reduce them to ashes. The inhabitants of those cities who were able to save themselves by flight, took shelter on the other side of the mountains, among the Huexotzincas and Tlascalans; all the rest died in defence of their country; but they sold their lives dearly, as the infinite blood spilt on both sides attested. If we should be disposed to trace the source of so many calamities, we should discover no other than the ambition of a prince. Heaven grant the sacrifices to the passions were more infrequent in the world and less violent! How calamitous is it that the avarice or ambition of a prince or his minister is sufficient to cover the plains with human blood, to destroy cities, to overturn kingdoms, and spread confusion over this globe!

The cruelty of the tyrant being appeased by the oppression of his enemies, the king of Acolhuacan was made to take an oath in the city of Tezcuco, to grant to all those who had taken up arms against him, general pardon, and liberty to return to their habitations. The city of

(*t*) Torquimada makes Matlalcibuatzin, daughter of Huitzilihuitl; but how? He says, that this king when he mounted the throne, was only seventeen years of age, nor yet married: and that he reigned twenty-two, or at most twenty-six years. On the other hand, he represents Nezahualcojotl, at the death of his pretended grandfather, of an age able to go to war, and make negotiations to secure himself the crown: from whence he would make out that Huitzilihuitl, before he was twenty-six years married, had grandsons at least twenty years old.



BOOK III. Tezcuco was given in fief to Chimalpopoca, king of Mexico, and that of Huexotla to Tlacatcotl, king of Tlatelolco, as a reward for the services which they had rendered during the war. He placed faithful governors in other places, and proclaimed Azcapozalco the royal residence and capital of all the kingdom of Acolhuacan.

At this solemnity were present, though in disguise, several persons of distinction, enemies of the tyrant, and amongst these the prince Nezahualcojotl. The grief and rage which filled him aided by the ardour of youth, was like to have urged him to a rash action against his enemies, if a confidential friend, who accompanied him, had not withheld him, by representing the fatal consequences of such temerity, and making him sensible how much more prudent it would be to wait till time presented him a fitter opportunity for the recovery of his crown, and revenge of his enemies; that the tyrant was already worn out with age, and that his death, which could not be very distant, would entirely change the state of affairs; that the people themselves would come willingly to submit themselves to their lawful sovereign, from a sense of the injustice and cruelty of the usurper. Upon this same occasion, a Mexican officer of respect, (probably Itzcoatl, the brother of the king, and general of the Mexican forces), either of his own accord, or by order of the king Chimalpopoca, ascended the temple, which the Toltecas had at that court, and addressed the multitude around him, "Hear, Chechemecas, hear Acolhuas, and all ye who are present. Let no one dare to offer any hurt to our son Nezahuacotl, nor permit others to hurt him, if he is not willing to subject himself to severe chastisement." This proclamation contributed much to the prince's security, no body wishing to draw upon himself the anger of a nation which began now to make itself respected.

A little time after, many of those nobles who had taken refuge in Huexotzinco and Tlascala, to avoid the fury of the Tepanecan troops, assembled at *Papalotla*, a place near to Tezcuco, to deliberate on the conduct they should pursue in the present circumstances; and they all agreed to submit themselves to the new lords whom the usurper had appointed to their cities, that they might be free from farther hostilities, and attend in peace to the care of their families and habitations.

After

After having satisfied his ambition with the usurpation of the kingdom of Acolhuacan, and his cruelty with the slaughter he had committed, the tyrant was desirous of gratifying his avarice by laying new taxes on his subjects. Besides the tribute which they had hitherto paid their king of provisions, and a robe to array him, he enjoined them to pay him another tribute of gold and precious stones, without advertising how much such burdens would tend to exasperate the minds of his subjects, which he should rather have endeavoured to gain by moderation and lenity, to give himself more security in the possession of a throne founded on cruelty and injustice. The Toltecan and Chechemecan nobles answered the proclamation by desiring to present themselves in person before the king, to be heard on the subject. The arrogance of the tyrant appeared to them unbounded, and his conduct widely different from the moderation of the ancient kings of whom he was descended. They agreed to send to him two eloquent deputies the most learned among them, one a Tolteca, the other a Chechemeca, that each in the name of his nation might remonstrate with energy and force. They both went to Azcapozalco, when being admitted to an audience of the tyrant, the Toltecan orator in respect to the greater antiquity of his nation in that country began first, and represented to him the humble beginning of the Toltecas, the necessities they endured before they rose to that splendour and glory which they had for some time enjoyed, and the misery to which they were reduced since their revolution; he described the deplorable dispersion in which they were found by Xolotl, when he first arrived in that country, and taking a review of the two last centuries, he made a pathetic enumeration of the hardships they had suffered, to move the tyrant to compassion, and get his nation exempted from the new grievances.

The Tolteca had hardly finished his harangue when the Chechemeca began his: "I, my lord, may speak to you with greater confidence  
"and liberty; as I am a Chechemeca, and address myself to a prince  
"of my own nation, who is a descendant of the great kings Xolotl,  
"Nopaltzin, and Tlotzin. You are not ignorant that those divine  
"Chechemecas, your ancestors, set no value on gold or precious stones.  
"They wore no other crown on their heads than a garland of herbs  
"and flowers of the field, nor adorned themselves with any other brace-  
"lets



## BOOK III.

“lets than the stiff leather against which beat the string of their bow  
 “in shooting. Their food at first was confined to raw flesh, and plain  
 “herbs, and their dress was the skin of the stags and wild beasts which  
 “they themselves hunted. When they were taught agriculture by the  
 “Toltecas, their kings themselves cultivated the land to encourage by  
 “their example their subjects to fatigue. The wealth and glory to  
 “which fortune afterwards raised them, did not make them more  
 “proud. As kings they certainly made use of their subjects, but as  
 “fathers they loved them, and were contented to be requited by them  
 “with the simple gifts of the earth. I do not call to your memory  
 “these illustrious examples of your ancestors, for any other reason than  
 “that I may most humbly entreat you not to demand more from us  
 “now than they did from our predecessors.” The tyrant listened to  
 each harangue, and although the comparison drawn between him and  
 the ancient kings was odious, he dissembled his disgust, and contented  
 himself with giving licence to the orators to confirm the order pub-  
 lished respecting the new tax.

In the mean time, Nezahualcojotl went anxiously through many ci-  
 ties, to gain their affection, that he might replace himself on the throne.  
 But although his subjects loved him, and were desirous of seeing him  
 in possession of the kingdom, they durst not openly favour his party  
 from their fear of the tyrant. Among the subjects who were the nearest  
 related to him, and had abandoned him, were the lord of *Chimalpan*  
 his uncle, and *Tecpanecatl* the brother of his second wife *Nezahualxo-*  
*chitl*, of the royal line of Mexico. Persevering in such negotiations,  
 he arrived one evening at a village of the province of Chalco, belong-  
 ing to a lady and widow named *Tziltomiaub*. He observed that there  
 was a plantation of aloes, from which the widow extracted wine, not  
 only for the use of her family, but also for sale, which was strictly for-  
 bid by the Chechemecan code. He was so fired with zeal for the laws  
 of his fathers, that he felt no restraint from the adversity of his for-  
 tune, nor any other consideration, but with his own hand put the de-  
 linquent to death. An action most inconsiderate and reprehensible, in  
 which prudence had a far less share than the intemperate ardour of  
 youth. This deed raised a great rumour in that province, and the lord  
 of Chalco, who was his enemy, and had been an accomplice in the  
 death

death of his father, used the utmost diligence to have him in his power; but the prince, who foresaw the consequences of his act, had already placed himself in security.

Eight years were now elapsed, during which Tezozomoc had possessed in peace the kingdom of Acolhuacan, claimed in vain by Nezahualcojotl, when fatal dreams threw the tyrant into extreme perturbation. He dreamed that Nezahualcojotl transformed into an eagle, opened his breast and eat his heart; and at another time, changed into a lion, licked his body, and sucked his blood. He was so intimidated with these ominous visions, which were formed by the consciousness of his own injustice and tyranny, that he called together his three sons *Tajatzin*, *Teuctzintli*, and *Maxlaton*, imparted to them his dreams, and charged them to put Nezahualcojotl to death as speedily as possible, provided they could do it so secretly that no person should suspect the author of it. He hardly survived his dreams a year. He was now become so old, he was no more able to keep himself in necessary warmth, nor erect in a chair, but was obliged to be wholly covered up in cotton, in a great basket made of willows in the form of a cradle; but from this cradle, or rather sepulchre, he tyrannised over the kingdom of Acolhuacan, and delivered oracles of injustice. A little before his death, he declared his son *Tajatzin* his successor in the kingdom, and repeated his command respecting the death of Nezahualcojotl, preserving to his expiring moments his malicious designs. In 1422, this monster of ambition, treachery, and injustice, ended his life, after having tyrannised over the kingdom of Acolhuacan for nine years, and possessed for a considerable period the state of Azcapozalco (*u*).

SECT. XIII.  
Death of the  
tyrant Tezo-  
zomoc.

Although the giving proper orders for the funeral of his father belonged to *Tajatzin*, as successor to the crown, nevertheless his brother

(*u*) Torquemada makes Tezozomoc an immediate descendant of the first Acolhuan prince; by which he makes his reign one hundred and sixty, or one hundred and eighty years: but from the harangue made by the Chechemecan orator, it is evident, that Tezozomoc was descended of *Xolotl Nopaltzin* and *Tlotzin*. The sister of *Nopaltzin* married the prince *Acolhuatzin*, whence their children were cousins of *Tlotzin*, the son of *Nopaltzin*. In all this Torquemada agrees with us. Whoever then could be called the descendant of his cousin? Whoever reads the genealogy of the Chechemecan kings in the works of Torquemada, will instantly perceive the mistakes made by this author. There may have been two or three lords of Azcapozalco named *Tezozomoc*, but the tyrant of Acolhuacan was at most great-grandson of prince *Acolhuatzin*.



BOOK III. Maxtlaton, being more forward and active, arrogated the right to himself, and began to command with as much authority as if he had been already in possession of the kingdom at which he aspired, imagining it would be easy to oppress his brother, who was a man of no abilities, and unskilled in the art of government. He sent information to the kings of Mexico and Tlatelolco, and other lords, that they might honour with their presence and their tears the funeral of their common lord. Nezahuacotl, though not summoned, was willing to be present, as may easily be imagined, to observe with his own eyes the disposition of the court. He was accompanied by a confidential friend and a small retinue; having entered the hall of the royal palace where the corpse lay exposed, he found the kings of Mexico and Tlatelolco, the three princes, sons of the late tyrant, and some other lords. He saluted them all one after another, according to the order in which they sat, beginning with the king of Mexico, and presented them bunches of flowers, according to the custom of that country. Having paid his compliments he sat down by the side of king Chimalpopoca, his brother-in-law, to accompany him in condolence. Teuctzintli, one of the sons of Tezozomoc, who inherited his cruelty, conceiving this a good occasion to execute the iniquitous charge of his father on Nezahualcojotl, proposed it to his brother Maxtlaton. He, however, though of no less inhuman a heart, had more understanding and judgment. "Banish," he replied, "banish from your mind such a thought. "What would men say of us if they should see us plotting against the "life of another while we ought to be employed in mourning for our "father? They would say, that the grief was not deep which gave "way to ambition and revenge. Time will present us with an occasion more favourable for the accomplishment of our father's purpose, "without incurring the odium of our subjects. Nezahualcojotl is not "invisible; unless he hides himself in fire, in water, or in the bowels "of the earth, he will inevitably fall into our hands." This happened on the fourth day after the death of the tyrant, when the corpse was burnt, and his ashes buried with unusual pomp and solemnity.

The next day the kings of Mexico and Tlatelolco returned to their cities, and Maxtlaton began soon by less dissimulation to discover his ambi-

ambitious design of making himself master of the kingdom, shewing by his arrogance and daring temper, that where his arts would not be sufficient, he would employ force. Tajatzin had not courage to oppose him, knowing the bold and violent disposition of his brother, and the advantage he had in having subjects accustomed to obey him. On so difficult a point, he took therefore the resolution of resorting to Mexico to consult with king Chimalpopoca, to whom he had been chiefly recommended by his father. This king received him with particular marks of esteem, and, after the usual compliments, Chimalpopoca addressed him. "What are you doing, prince. Is not the kingdom yours? Did not your father leave it to you? Why do you not exert yourself to recover it, if you are unjustly robbed of it?" "Because my rights avail but little, if my subjects do not assist me. My brother has made himself master of the kingdom, and no person seems to give him opposition: it would be rashness to oppose him with no other power or forces than my desires, and the justice of my cause." "What is not to be done by force may be supplied by industry," replied Chimalpopoca, "I will point out to you a method to get rid of your brother, and restore yourself without danger to the possession of the throne. Excuse yourself for not inhabiting the palace of your deceased father, under pretence that your grief is revived by the remembrance of his actions, and the love which he bore you, and that therefore you are willing to build yourself another palace for your residence. When it is finished, make a splendid entertainment, and invite your brother to it, and there, in the midst of the rejoicings, it will be easy to free your kingdom of a tyrant, and yourself of a rival so dangerous and unjust; and that you may more certainly succeed, I shall attend to assist you in person, with all the forces of my nation." To such counsel Tajatzin made no reply, but looks of dark melancholy, occasioned by the love he had to blood, or the baseness of the act suggested to him.

To all this discourse a servant of Tajatzin was privy, who had concealed himself where he could easily overhear them, and hoping to make his fortune by betraying them, he departed secretly at night for Azcapozalco, went directly to the palace, where having obtained an audience, he revealed to Maxtlaton all he had heard. His mind was sud-



BOOK III. denly seized with anger, fear, and vexation, which the relation had excited; but being politic, and practised in dissembling his sentiments, he affected to despise the whole, and severely reprimanded the reporter for his hardness and temerity in calumniating such respectable personages, called him drunkard, and dismissed him to digest his wine at home. The remainder of the night he passed in deliberation what measure he should pursue, and determined at last to anticipate his brother, and catch him in his own snare.

SECT. XIV.  
Maxtlaton,  
tyrant of A-  
colhuacan.

The morning of the ensuing day he assembled the people of Azcapozalco, and told them, that having no right to remain any longer in his father's palace, as it belonged to prince Tajatzin, and having besides occasion for a house at that court where he might be lodged when ever any business required him to come from his state of Cojohuacan, he desired they would shew the love they bore him by the most speedy construction of such a residence. Such was the diligence of the Azcapozalchese, and so great the multitude of workmen who were collected, that Tajatzin, who only continued three days in Mexico, found on his return the edifice already begun. He was struck with wonder at this novelty, and enquiring the cause at Maxtlaton, was answered by him, that finding it his duty to leave the royal mansion, in justice to Tajatzin's rights, he was erecting another where he might reside when he should come to court. The good Tajatzin remained satisfied with this answer, and easily persuaded himself that Maxtlaton thought no more of usurping the crown. A little time after the building being finished, Maxtlaton invited his brothers the kings of Mexico and Tlatelolco, and other lords to an entertainment. Tajatzin being totally ignorant of the treachery of his servant, did not suspect the snare which was laid for him: but Chimalpopoca, who was more discerning and cautious, certainly was suspicious of some treachery, and politely excused himself from attendance. The day appointed for the festival being arrived, the guests resorted to the new mansion, and at the time they were most engaged in jollity and mirth, and probably also heated with wine, which is the most favourable time for deeds of this nature, suddenly people in arms entered, and poured with such violence on the unfortunate Tajatzin, that he had scarcely lifted his eyes to behold his murderers, when they were closed in death. So unexpected

pected a tragedy disturbed, and shocked the whole meeting ; but Maxtlaton quieted them by explaining the treason which was designed against him ; and protesting, that what he had done, was only to prevent the blow which threatened himself. By these and similar discourses, he so far altered their minds, that in place of revenging the death of their lawful lord, they proclaimed the treacherous tyrant, king ; but, although injustice raised him to the throne, it was only to precipitate him from a greater height.

His indignation against the king of Mexico was still greater ; but it did not appear prudent to make any attempt against his life until he should feel himself firmly seated on the throne. In the mean while he vented his rage by doing injuries to his person, and offering outrages to his dignity. A little time after his intrusion on the kingdom, the present which it was usual to make, as a mark of acknowledgement of the high power of the king of Azcapozalco, was sent to him by the king of Mexico. This present, which consisted of three baskets of white-fish, craw-fish, frogs, and some pulse, was carried by respectable persons from the court of Chimalpopoca, with a polite address, and particular expressions of submission and respect. Maxtlaton shewed himself pleased ; but as it was proper, according to the custom of those nations, to return some gift, and being desirous, at the same time, of gratifying his pique, after consulting with his confidents, he caused to be delivered to the Mexican ambassadors for their king a *Cueitl*, that is a woman's gown, and a *Huepilli*, which is a woman's shift, intimating by these that he esteemed their king an effeminate coward : an insult the most gross to those nations, as nothing was so much in estimation with them as the boast of being courageous. Chimalpopoca felt sufficiently on the occasion, and would have revenged the outrage ; but he was unable.

This disdainful act was soon succeeded by a most heinous offence to his honour. The tyrant knew that among the wives of the king of Mexico, there was one singularly beautiful : being inflamed by this occasion with wicked desires, he determined to sacrifice both honour and justice to his passion. To obtain his purpose he employed some ladies of Tepaneca, and enjoined them when they visited, as they were accustomed to do, that Mexican lady, to invite her to spend some days

of

SECT. XV.  
Maxtlaton,  
tyrant of A-  
colhuacan.



## BOOK III.

of pleasure with them at Azcapozalco. Such visits being frequent among persons of the first rank, of different nations, it was not difficult for the abandoned prince to gain the opportunity he so much longed for, to satisfy his criminal passion; neither the tears nor efforts made by that virtuous Mexican in defence of her honour, were sufficient to restrain him: she returned to Mexico with ignominy, and pierced with the most affecting anguish to mourn with her husband. The unfortunate king, either that he might not survive his dishonour, or that he might not die in the hands of the tyrant, resolved to put an end to his wretched life, by dying a sacrifice in honour of his God, Huitzilopochtli, as many pretended heroes of his nation had done, believing such a death would cancel his dishonour, at least save him from some ignominious exit, which he dreaded from his enemy. He communicated this resolution to his courtiers, who applauded it, from the extravagant ideas they entertained in matters of religion, and some of them even were willing to partake of the glory of so barbarous a sacrifice.

SECT. XVI.  
Imprisonment and  
death of king  
Chimalpopoca.

The day appointed for this religious tragic scene being come, the king appeared dressed in the manner they usually represented their God Huitzilopochtli, and all those who were to accompany him were dressed also in their best habits. This religious ceremony began with a solemn ball; and while it lasted the priests sacrificed the unhappy victims one after another, reserving the king to the last. It was hardly possible such a transaction could remain unknown to the tyrant; he knew it by anticipation, and that he might prevent his enemy escaping from his revenge by voluntary death, he sent a body of troops to take him before he was sacrificed. They arrived when there hardly remained two victims, after whom the king himself was to follow. This unhappy prince was seized by the Tepanecas, and conducted instantly to Azcapozalco, where he was put into a strong cage of wood, which was the prison used by these nations, as we shall mention hereafter, under custody of strong guards. In this event many circumstances appear difficult to be credited: but we relate it as we find it told by the historians of Mexico. It is certainly much to be wondered at, that the Tepanecas should have dared to enter into that city and attempt so dangerous an act; and that the Mexicans should not have armed themselves

selves in defence of their king ; but the power of the tyrant may have, BOOK III.  
 of itself, been sufficient to encourage the Tepanecas and intimidate  
 the Mexicans.

The taking of Chimalpopoca prisoner, excited fresh desire in the mind of Maxtlaton to get the prince Nezahualcojotl also into his power ; to effect this more easily he sent for him under pretence of being willing to come to an agreement with him, respecting the crown of Acolhuacan. The discerning prince immediately penetrated the malevolent intention of the tyrant ; but the ardour of youth, the courage and confidence of his soul, made him present himself intrepidly before the sternest dangers. In passing through Tlatelolco, he paid a visit to one of his confidants, named *Chichincatl*, by whom he was informed, that the tyrant was not only plotting against his life and the king of Tlatelolco, but, were it possible, desired to annihilate the whole Acolhuan nation. Notwithstanding this, in the evening the prince set out fearless for Azcapozalco, and went directly to the house of one of his friends. Early in the morning he waited on *Chachaton*, a great favourite of the tyrant, and by whom the prince himself was beloved, and recommended to him to dissuade Maxtlaton from any design against his person. They went together to the palace ; when Chachaton preceded to acquaint his lord of the arrival of the prince, and to speak in his favour. The prince entered after, and when he had paid his obeisance, thus spoke : “ I know, my lord, that you have imprisoned the king of Mexico, but I am ignorant whether you have made him suffer death, or if he still lives in prison. I have heard, also, that it is your wish to take away my life. If this is true, behold me before you ; kill me with your own hands, and gratify the malice which you bear to a prince not less innocent than unfortunate.” While he spoke these words, the memory of his misfortunes forced tears from his eyes. “ What is your opinion ?” said Maxtlaton, then to his favourite, “ Is it not strange that a youth, who has hardly begun to enjoy life, should seek death so daringly ?” Turning to the prince, he assured him, that he was forming no design against his life, that the king of Mexico was not dead, nor would be put to death by him ; and endeavoured to justify the imprisonment of that unfortunate king. He then gave orders that the prince should be properly entertained.



## BOOK III.

Chimalpopoca being acquainted of the arrival of the prince who was his cousin, at court, sent to request a visit from him in prison. The prince having first obtained the permission of Maxtlaton, went to him, and upon his entering the prison, embraced him, and both of them shewed much tenderness in their looks and expressions. Chimalpopoca related to him the series of insults and wrongs which he had suffered, and convinced him of the malevolent designs of the tyrant against them both, and entreated him not to return again to the court; as their cruel enemy would infallibly contrive his death, and the Acolhuan nation would be utterly abandoned. At last he said, "As my death is inevitable, I beseech you most earnestly take care of my poor Mexicans, be to them a true friend and father. In token of the love which I bear you, accept of this pendant which I had from my brother Huitzili-huitl;" upon which he took a pendant of gold from his lip, and presented it with ear-rings and some other jewels which he had preserved in prison; and to a servant of the prince he gave a few other things. They then affectionately took leave of each other, that they might not excite suspicion by a longer conference. Nezahualcojotl, using the advice which was given him, left the court without delay, and never after presented himself before the tyrant. He went to Tlatelolco, where he took a vessel with good rowers, and got speedily to Tezcuco.

Chimalpopoca remained in comfortless solitude brooding over his misfortunes. Imprisonment became daily more insupportable to him; he had not the smallest hope of recovering his liberty, nor of being of any service to his nation during the little time he had to live. "If at last," he said, "I am to die here, will it not be preferable, and more glorious to die by my own than by the hands of a cruel and perfidious tyrant? If I can have no other revenge, I shall at least deprive him of the pleasure which he would take in appointing the time and mode of death which must finish my unhappy days. I shall be the disposer of my own life, chuse the time and manner of my death, as it will be attended with so much the less ignominy, the less the will of my enemy shall influence and direct it (x)." In this resolution, which was entirely conformable to the ideas of those nations, he hanged him-

(x) These last words of Chimalpopoca, handed down by the historians of Mexico, were known from the depositions of the guards who surrounded the cage or prison.

self upon a small beam of the cage or prison, making use, most probably, of his girdle for that purpose.

Thus tragic an end had the unfortunate life of the third king of Mexico. We have no more particular accounts of his character, or the progress the nation made during his reign, which lasted about thirteen years, being concluded in 1423, about a year after the death of Tezozomoc. We know only that in the eleventh year of his reign, he ordered a great stone to be brought to Mexico, to serve as an altar for the ordinary sacrifice of prisoners, and a larger round one, for gladiatorial sacrifices, of which we shall speak hereafter. In the fourth painting of Mendoza's collection, are represented the different victories which the Mexicans obtained during the reign of Chimalpopoca, the cities of Chalco, and Tequizquiac, and the naval engagement which they had with the Chalchese, with the loss of their people, and the vessels over-set by the enemy. The interpreter of that collection adds, that Chimalpopoca left many children whom he had by his concubines.

As soon as Maxtlaton knew of the death of his noble prisoner, he rose in wrath at the disappointment of his projects; and lest that Nezahualcojotl might also elude his revenge, he determined to anticipate death to him by whatever means he could, which he would have done before, could he have accomplished it in the manner enjoined by his father, or had he not been intimidated, as some historians affirm, by certain auguries of the priests; but his passion now surmounted all restraints of religion; he ordered four of his most able captains to go in quest of the prince, and take his life, without remission, wherever they should find him. The Tepanecan captains set out with a small party only, that rumour might not prevent their coming up with their spoil, and proceeded directly to Tezcuco, where, as they arrived, Nezahualcojotl was diverting himself at foot-ball with one of his familiars, named Ocelotl. Wherever the prince went to gain adherents to his party, he spent great part of his time at balls, games, and other amusements, that the governors of those places, who watched his conduct by order of the tyrant, and observed all his steps, seeing him taken up with pastimes, might be persuaded that he had dropt all thoughts of the crown, and gradually neglect to attend to him. By these means he carried on his negotiations without creating the slightest suspicion. On

SECT. XVI.  
Imprisonment and  
death of Chimalpopoca.



BOOK III. this occasion, before the captains entered his house, he knew that they were Tepanecas, and that they came armed : this made him apprehend what they might intend, upon which he left off play, and retired to his innermost apartment. Being informed, afterwards, by his porter, that the Tepanecas enquired for him, he ordered Ocelotl to receive them, and to acquaint them that he would attend them as soon as they had reposed and refreshed themselves. The Tepanecas did not imagine that by delaying they would lose the opportunity of striking their blow, and possibly also durst not execute their commission, as they were uncertain whether there were not attendants in the house sufficient to oppose them ; after some repose, therefore, they sat down to table, and while they were refreshing, the prince fled by a secret door, and travelled something more than a mile to Coatitlan, a small settlement of weavers, the people of which were all faithful and affectionate to him, and there concealed himself (y). The Tepanecas having waited a considerable time without the prince or his domestic making their appearance, they searched over the whole house, but no person could give any account of him. At length being persuaded of his flight, they set out instantly in search of him, and being informed by a countryman, in the road to Coatitlan, that he had taken refuge in that place, they entered there with their arms in their hands, threatening the inhabitants with death if they did not discover the fugitive prince ; but no person was found who would make this discovery ; and so uncommon was their example of fidelity, some were put to death for the refusal. Amongst those who made sacrifices of their lives to preserve their prince, were *Tockmantzin* the superintendant of all the looms of Coatitlan, and *Matlalintzin*, a woman of noble rank. The Tepanecas not being able, notwithstanding the utmost diligence in their search, and the cruelty they exercised against the inhabitants, to find out the prince, went in quest of him through the country. Nezahualcojotl set out also another way, and took a directly contrary route to his adversaries ; but as they fought

(y) Torquemada says the prince went out of his house by a kind of labyrinth, through which no person unacquainted with it could find his way. The prince and some of his most particular confidants only knew the secret of it. It is not at all incredible that he should have designed such a maze, as his genius was superior and himself distinguished above all his countrymen, in talents and penetration.

for

for him every where, he was in great hazard of falling into their hands, had he not been hid by some countrymen, under a heap of the herb chia, which was lying upon a threshing floor.

The prince finding himself safe from this danger, went to pass the night at Tezcotzinco, a pleasant villa formed by his ancestors for recreation. There he was waited for by six lords, who had left their states, and were traversing through the different cities of the kingdom. There they held a secret counsel that night, and resolved to solicit the assistance of the Chalchese, although they had been accomplices in the death of king Ixtlilixochitl. The next morning early, he proceeded to Matlallan and other places, intimating to those of his party to be prepared with arms by the time of his return. Two days were employed in these negotiations, and on the evening of the second he was met at Apan by the ambassadors of the Cholulans, who offered to assist him in war against the tyrant. Here he was joined also by two lords of his party, who communicated to him the unfortunate intelligence of the death of his favourite Huitzilihuitl, who was put to the torture by the tyrant, that he might reveal some secrets; but being too loyal to his master to discover them, he died a martyr to his fidelity. Full of this disgust he passed from Apan to Huexotzinco, the lord of which was his relation, and received him with infinite affection and kindness, and promised to assist him also with all his forces. From thence he went to Tlascala, where he was most nobly treated, and in that city the time and place was agreed upon at which the troops of Cholula, Huexotzinco, and Tlascala were to be assembled. When he departed from this last city to go to Capollalpan, a place situated about half way between Tlascala and Tezcuco, so many nobles accompanied him, he appeared more like a king who was going to take pleasure with his court, than a fugitive prince who was endeavouring to render himself master of the crown which was usurped from him. In Capollalpan, he received the answer of the Chalchese, in which they declared themselves ready to assist and serve their lawful lord against the iniquitous usurper. It is probable the cruelty and insolence of the tyrant alienated many from him; the Chalchese, besides, were very inconstant and apt to attach themselves sometimes to the one, and sometimes to the other party; as will appear in the course of our history.

SECT. XVII.  
Negociations  
of Nezahual-  
cojotl to ob-  
tain the  
crown.



## BOOK III.

SECT. XV. II  
Itzcoatl  
fourth king  
of Mexico.

While Nezahualcojotl continued rousing the nations to war, the Mexicans finding themselves without a king, and harrassed by the Tepanecas, resolved to appoint a chief to their nation, who would be capable of checking the insolence of the tyrant, and revenging the many wrongs they had suffered. Having assembled, therefore, to elect a new king, a respectable veteran thus addressed the other electors. “ By the death  
“ of your last king, O noble Mexicans, the light of your eyes has failed  
“ you; but you have still those of reason left to chuse a fit successor.  
“ The nobility of Mexico is not extinct with Chimalpopoca; his brothers are still remaining, who are most excellent princes, among  
“ whom you may chuse a lord to govern you, and a father to protect  
“ you. Imagine that for a little time the sun is eclipsed, and that the  
“ earth is darkened, but that light will return again with the new king.  
“ It is of the greatest importance that, without long conferences, we  
“ elect a prince who may re-establish the honour of our nation, may  
“ vindicate the wrongs done to it, and restore to it its ancient liberty.” They proceeded quickly to the election, and chose by unanimous consent prince Itzcoatl, brother, by the father’s side, to the two preceding kings, and natural son of Acamapitzin by a slave. Whatever the low condition of his mother took from his claim, the nobility and reputation of his father, and, still more, his own virtues, supplied; of these he gave many proofs in the post of general of the Mexican armies, which he had filled for more than thirty years. He was allowed to be the most prudent, just, and brave person of all the Mexican nation. Being placed on the *Tlatocaicpalli*, or royal seat, he was saluted as king by all the nobles, with loud acclamations. One of their orators then held a discourse on the duties of a sovereign, in which, among other things, he said, “ All, O great king and lord, all now feel themselves dependent  
“ on you. On your shoulders must the orphans, the widows, and the  
“ aged be supported. Will you be capable of laying down and abandoning this burden? Will you permit the infants who are yet walking  
“ on their four feet, to perish by the hands of our enemies? Courage,  
“ great lord, begin and spread your mantle that you may carry the poor  
“ Mexicans on your back, who flatter themselves they will live secure  
“ under the fresh shade of your benignity.” The ceremony being concluded, they celebrated the accession of the new monarch, with balls  
and

and public diversions. Nezahualcojotl and all his party did not give less applause, as no one doubted of the new king being the faithful ally of the prince his relation; and hoped to reap great advantages from his superior military skill and bravery; but the election was not a little displeasing to the Tepanecas and their allies, and especially to the tyrant.

Itzcoatl, who was zealously bent on relieving the distresses which his nation suffered from the oppressive dominion of the Tepanecas, sent an ambassador to the prince Nezahualcojotl, to acquaint him of his exaltation to the throne, and to give him assurances of his determination to unite all his forces with the prince against the tyrant Maxtlaton. This embassy, which was carried by a grandson of the king, was received by Nezahualcojotl, after he had departed from Capollalpan; upon which he returned congratulations to his cousin, and gratefully accepted the aid which he promised.

The whole time which the prince remained in Capollalpan was employed in preparations for war. When it appeared to him to be time to put all his designs in execution, he set out with his people and the auxiliary troops of Tlascala and Huexotzinco, having resolved to take the city of Tezcuco by assault, and punish its inhabitants for their infidelity to him during his adversity. He made a halt with his whole army in sight of the city, at a place called Oztopolco. There he passed the night ordering his troops, and making the necessary dispositions for the attack, and in the morning marched towards the city; but before he reached it, the inhabitants, from apprehensions of the severe chastisement which threatened them, came submissively to meet him; to soften his resentment they presented their aged sick, their pregnant women, and mothers with infants in their arms, who, in the midst of tears and other tokens of distress, thus addressed him: "Have pity, O most merciful prince, on these your afflicted servants, who tremble for their fate. In what have they offended, who are feeble with age, or these poor women and these helpless children? Do not mix in ruin with the guilty those who had no part in the offences which you would revenge." The prince, who was moved at the sight of so many objects of compassion, immediately granted a pardon to the city; but at the same time detached a party of troops, and commanded their officers to enter it and put the governor and other servants who had been established there.

by



BOOK III. by the tyrant, and every Tepaneca they should meet with, to death. Whilst this severe punishment was passing at Tezcuco, the troops of the Tlascalans and Huexotzincas, which had been detached from the main army, made a furious attack on the city of Acolman; they made a general slaughter of all whom they met, until they advanced to the house of the lord of that city, who was a brother of the tyrant; he having no forces sufficient to defend himself, was slain among the rest of their enemies. On the same day the Chalchese, who were also auxiliaries of the prince, fell upon the city of Coatlichan, took it without opposition, and put its governor to death, who had taken refuge in the greater temple; thus, in one single day, the capital and two other considerable cities of the kingdom of Acolhuacan, were reduced under obedience to the prince.

SECT. XIX.  
Occurrences  
to Montezuma  
Ilhuicamina.

The king of Mexico being acquainted with the successes of his cousin, sent another embassy to congratulate him and confirm their alliance. He entrusted this embassy to one of his grandsons, a son of king Huitzilihuitl, called *Monteuczoma*, or *Montezuma*, a youth of great strength of body and invincible courage, whose immortal actions obtained him the name of *Tlacaale*, or Man of great Heart, and that of *Ilhuicamina*, or Archer of Heaven; and to distinguish him in the ancient paintings, they represented over his head, the heavens pierced with an arrow, as appears in the seventh and eighth pictures of Mendoza's Collection, and as we shall shew among the figures of the kings of Mexico. This is the same hero of Mexico, whom Acosta has so much celebrated under the name of *Tlacaell*, or rather Tobar, from whom the other took his character, although mistaken in many actions which he attributes to him (z). The king as well as his grandson, saw the danger of the enterprize; as the tyrant, to obstruct the progress of his rival, and his communication with the Mexicans, had made himself master of the roads; but the king for this neither delayed to send the embassy, nor did Montezuma discover the least cowardly

(z) Acosta, or Tobar rather, is not only mistaken in many actions which he attributes to this hero, but also in regard to his identity; as he considers Tlacaell to be a different person from Montezuma, who was called by two, and even three different names. He also makes Tlacaell grandson of Itzcoatl, and at the same time uncle of Montezuma; which is evidently absurd; as it is known that Montezuma was son of Huitzilihuitl, brother of Itzcoatl; of course he could not be the grandson of the grandson of Itzcoatl.

apprehensions; on the contrary, that he might execute the orders of his sovereign more speedily, when he left the king he avoided returning to his house to equip himself with necessaries for his journey, but set out immediately on his way, giving in charge to another noble, who was to accompany him, the carrying of such cloaths as were necessary to present himself before the prince.

Having safely delivered his embassy, he took leave of the prince to return to Mexico, but in the way fell into an ambuscade laid by his enemies, was taken prisoner with all his attendants, conducted to Chalco, and presented to *Toteotzin*, lord of that city, and an inveterate enemy of the Mexicans. Here he was immediately shut up in a close prison, under the care of *Quateotzin*, a very respectable person, who was ordered to provide no sustenance for the prisoners but what his lord prescribed, until the mode of death was determined, by which their days were to be concluded. *Quateotzin* revolting at the inhumanity of such orders, supplied them liberally at his own expence. But the cruel *Toteotzin*, thinking to pay a piece of flattering homage to the *Huexotzincas*, sent his prisoners to them, that, if they judged proper, they might be sacrificed in *Huexotzinco* with the assistance of the *Chalchese*, or in *Chalco* with the assistance of the *Huexotzincas*. The *Huexotzincas*, who were always more humane than the *Chalchese*, rejected the proposal with disdain. “Why should we deprive men of their lives who have committed no crime, unless that of acting as faithful messengers to their lord; and if they merited to die, we can derive no honour from putting prisoners to death which do not belong to us. Return in peace, and inform your lord that the nobility of *Huexotzinco* will not render themselves infamous by acts so unworthy of them.”

The *Chalchese* returned with the prisoners and this answer to *Toteotzin*, who being determined to procure himself friends by means of his prisoners, gave information of them to *Maxtlaton*; leaving it to him to decide their fate, and trusting, by this respectful adulation, to calm the anger and indignation which his treachery and inconstancy in abandoning the party of the *Tepanecas*, for the prince *Nezahualcojotl*, must have excited in the tyrant. While he waited the answer of *Maxtlaton*, he ordered the prisoners to be shut up again in the same prison,



## BOOK III.

and under custody of the same Quateotzin. He compassionating the destiny of a youth so illustrious and brave, in the evening preceding the day on which the answer from Azcapozalco was expected, called one of his servants to him, whose fidelity he could trust, and ordered him to set the prisoners at liberty that evening, and to acquaint Montezuma from him, that he had come to the resolution of saving his life, although at the visible risk of losing his own; that if he should die for it, which he had reason to fear would be his fate, Montezuma, he hoped, would not fail to shew his gratitude, by protecting the children whom he left behind him; lastly, he advised him not to return by land to Mexico, otherwise he would again be taken by the guards which were posted in the way, but to go through Iztapallocan to Chimalhuacan, and from thence to embark for his own city.

The faithful servant executed the order, and Montezuma followed the advice of Quateotzin. They went out of prison that night, and cautiously took the road to Chimalhuacan, where they remained concealed all the next day, living on raw vegetables for want of other food; at night they embarked, and transported themselves swiftly to Mexico, where, as it was supposed, they had already met with death from the enemy, they were received with singular welcome and joy.

As soon as the barbarous Toteotzin was informed that the prisoners were escaped, he was transported with passion, and as he did not in the least doubt that Quateotzin had been the author of their liberty, he ordered instant death to him, and his body to be quartered; sparing neither his wife nor even his children; only one son and one daughter were saved. She took shelter in Mexico, where she was greatly respected on account of her father, who, by the generous forfeiture of his life, had rendered so important a service to the Mexican nation.

Toteotzin experienced another galling disappointment from the answer of Maxtlaton. He being enraged against the Chalchese for the assistance they gave to Nezahualcojotl, and the slaughter they committed in Coatlicchan, sent a severe reprimand to Toteotzin, calling him a double-minded traitor, and ordering him to set the prisoners at liberty without delay. Such returns must perfidious flatterers expect. Maxtlaton did not adopt this resolution with intent to favour the Mexicans whom

whom he hated in the utmost degree, but solely to shew his contempt for the homage of Toteotzin, and to thwart his inclination. So far was he from a wish to favour the Mexican nation, that he was never so much bent on effecting their ruin as at this time, and had already collected troops to pour a decisive blow on Mexico, that from thence he might proceed to regain all that Nezahualcojotl had taken from him. This prince knowing such designs of Maxtlaton, went to Mexico to consult with its prudent king on the conduct of the war, and the measures that should be taken to baffle the intentions of the tyrant, and agreed to unite the Tezcucan troops, with those of Mexico, in defence of that city, on the fortune of which the success of the war seemed to depend.

The rumour of the approaching war spread infinite consternation among the Mexican populace; conceiving themselves incapable of resisting the power of the Tepanecas, whom they had till now acknowledged their superiors, they went in crowds to the king, dissuading him with tears and intreaties from undertaking so dangerous a war, which would infallibly occasion the downfall of their city and nation. "What can be done then," said the king, "to free us from these impending calamities." "Demand peace," replied the populace, "from the king of Azcapozalco, and make offers of service to him; and to move him to clemency, let our god be borne on the shoulders of the priests into his presence." So great was their clamour, accompanied with threats, that the prudent king who feared a sedition amongst the people which might prove more fatal in its consequences than the war with the enemy, was obliged, contrary to his wishes, to yield to their request. Montezuma who was present, and could not bear that a nation, which boasted so much of its honour, should pursue so ignoble a course, spoke thus to the people. "O ye Mexicans, what would ye do? Have ye lost all judgment? How has such cowardice stole into your hearts? Have you forgot possibly that you are Mexicans, and descendants of those heroes who founded this city, and of those brave men who have protected it in spite of all our enemies? Change your opinions then, or renounce the glory you inherit from your ancestors." Turning afterwards to the king; "How, sir, will you permit such ignominy to stain the character of your people? Speak to  
Vol. I. Y " them



BOOK III. "them again, and tell them, that there is another step to be taken  
"before we so weakly and dishonourably put ourselves into the hands  
"of our enemies."

The king, who wished for nothing more ardently, addressed the populace, recommending the counsel of Montezuma, which was at last favourably received. The king, then addressing the nobility, said, "Which of ye, who are the flower of the nation, will be fearless enough to carry an embassy to the lord of the Tepanecas?" They all looked at each other, but no one durst offer to encounter the danger; until Montezuma, whom youthful intrepidity inspired, presented himself, saying, "I will carry the embassy; as death must one time or other be met with, it is of little moment whether to-day or to-morrow; no better opportunity can present itself of dying with honour than the sacrificing my life for the welfare of my nation? Behold me, sir, ready to execute your commands: order, and I obey." The king, much pleased with his courage, ordered him to go and propose peace to the tyrant, but to accept of no dishonourable conditions. The valiant youth set out instantly, and meeting with the Tepanecan guards, persuaded them to let him pass with an embassy of the utmost importance to their lord. Having presented himself before the tyrant, in the name of his king and his nation, he demanded peace on honourable terms. The tyrant answered, that it was necessary to deliberate with his counsellors, but on the day following he would return a decisive answer. Montezuma having asked him for protection and security during his stay, could obtain no other than his own caution might procure him; upon which he went back immediately to Mexico, promising to return the day after. The little confidence he had in that court, and the shortness of the journey, which did not exceed four miles, must unquestionably have been his motive for not staying for the final answer of the tyrant. He returned, therefore, to Azcapotzalco the next day as he had promised, and having heard from the mouth of Maxtlaton his resolution for war, he performed the ceremonies commonly practised by two lords who challenge each other, namely, presenting certain defensive arms to him, anointing his head, and fixing feathers upon it in the same manner as is done with dead persons; and lastly, protesting in the name of his king, that as he  
would

would not accept the peace which was offered to him, he, and all the Tepanecas would inevitably be ruined. The tyrant, without manifesting any displeasure at such ceremonies, or at the threats used to him, gave Montezuma also arms to present to the king of Mexico, and directed him, for the security of his person, to return in disguise through a small outlet from his palace. He would not have observed so strictly at this time the rights of nations, if he could have foreseen that this ambassador, of whose life he was so careful, was to prove the chief instrument of his downfall. Montezuma profited by his advice; but as soon as he saw himself out of danger he began to insult the guards, reproaching them for their negligence, and threatening them with their speedy destruction. The guards rushed violently upon him to kill him; but he so bravely defended himself, that he killed one or two of them, and on the approach of others he retreated precipitately to Mexico, bearing the news that war was declared, and that the chiefs of the two nations had challenged each other.

With this intelligence the populace were again thrown into consternation, and repaired to the king to request his permission to abandon their city; believing their ruin was certain. The king comforted and encouraged them with hopes of victory. "But if we are conquered," said the populace, "what will become of us?" "If that happens," answered the king, "we are that moment bound to deliver ourselves into your hands to be made sacrifices at your pleasure." "So be it," replied the populace, "if we are conquered: but if we obtain the victory, we, and our descendants are bound to be tributary to you, to cultivate your lands, and those of the nobles, to build your houses, and to carry for you, when you go to war, your arms and your baggage." This contract being made between the nobles and the people, and the command of the Mexican troops being given to the brave Montezuma, the king conveyed speedy advice to Nezahualcojotl, to repair with his army immediately to Mexico, which he did a day before the battle.

SECT. XXI.  
War against  
the tyrant.

It cannot be doubted, that the Mexicans had before this time constructed the roads which served for a more easy communication to the city with the continent; as otherwise the movement and skirmishes of the two armies are not to be comprehended: we know from history,



BOOK III. that such roads were intersected by ditches, with drawbridges over them, but no historian mentions the time of their construction (*a*). It is not a little wonderful, that the Mexicans, during a life of so many hardships, should have had the spirit to undertake and constancy to execute a work of such magnitude and difficulty.

The following day, upon the arrival of the prince Nezahualcojotl at Mexico, the Tepanecan army appeared in the field in great numbers and brilliancy, being adorned with plates of gold, and wearing beautiful plumes of feathers on their heads, to add to the appearance of their stature. As they marched they made frequent shouts, in boastful anticipation of victory. Their army was commanded by a famous general called *Mazatl*. The tyrant Maxtlaton, although he had accepted the challenge, did not think proper to leave his palace, either because he believed he would degrade himself by going to combat with the king of Mexico, or, which is more probable, because he dreaded the event of the war. As soon as the Mexicans were informed of the motions of the Tepanecas, they went out well ordered to meet them, and the signal for engagement being given by king Itzcoatl, by the sound of a little drum which he carried on his shoulder, the armies attacked each other with incredible fury, each being firmly persuaded that the issue of the battle would determine their fate. During the greatest part of the day it was not to be discerned to which side victory inclined, the Tepanecas losing in one place what they gained in another. But a little before the setting sun, the Mexican populace observing the enemy continually increased by new reinforcements, began to be dismayed, and to complain of their chiefs, saying to each other, "What are we about, O Mexicans, shall we do well in sacrificing our lives to the ambition of our king and our general? How much more prudent will it be to surrender ourselves, humbly acknowledging our rashness, that we may obtain pardon and the favour of our lives?"

The king, who heard these words with much vexation, and perceived his troops still more discouraged by them, called a council of the prince and general, to take their advice what should be done to dissipate the

(*a*) I believe the Mexicans had before this time constructed the roads of Tacuba and Tepeyacac, but not that of Iztapallapan, which is larger than those, and where the lake is deeper.

fears of the people. "What?" answered Montezuma; "To fight till death. If we die with our arms in our hands, defending our liberty, we will do our duty. If we survive our defeat, we will remain covered with eternal confusion. Let us go then, let us fight till we die." The cries of the Mexicans began already to prevail as if they had been conquered, some of them being even so mean-spirited as to call out to their enemies, "O ye brave Tepanecas, lords of the continent, calm your indignation; for now we surrender. Here before your eyes we will sacrifice our chiefs, to gain your pardon to our rashness which their ambition has occasioned." The king, the prince, the general, and nobles, were so enraged at these speeches, that they would instantly have punished the cowards with death, had not the fear of giving victory to the enemy restrained them. Dissembling their displeasure, they exclaimed with one voice, "Let us die with glory," and rushed with such vigour upon the enemy, that they repulsed them from a ditch which they had gained, and made them retreat. Seeing this advantage, the king began to encourage his people, and the prince and general continued to perform signal acts of bravery. In the utmost heat of the engagement Montezuma encountered with the Tepanecan general, as he was advancing full of pride from the terror his troops struck to the Mexicans, and gave him so furious a blow on the head, that he fell down lifeless at his feet. The report of the victory spread immediately through the whole field, and inspired the Mexicans with fresh courage: but the Tepanecas were so disconcerted by the death of their brave general Mazatl, that they soon went into confusion. Night coming on prevented the Mexicans from pursuing their success: upon which both the armies withdrew to their cities, the Mexicans full of courage, and impatient at not being able, from the darkness of the night, to complete their victory; the Tepanecas downcast and dejected, though not altogether void of hope to be revenged the following day.

Maxtlaton, afflicted at the death of his general, and the defeat of his troops, passed that night the last of his life, in encouraging his captains, and representing to them on the one hand the glory of triumphing over their enemies, and on the other the misfortunes which must ensue if they were vanquished; as the Mexicans, who had hitherto  
been



## BOOK III.

SECT. XXII.  
Conquest of  
Azcapozalco, and death  
of the tyrant Maxtlaton.

been tributary to the Tepanecas, if they remained victors, would compel the Tepanecas to pay a tribute to them (b).

The day at length arrived which was to decide the fate of three kings. Both armies took the field, and began battle with uncommon fury, which continued with much fierceness and heat till mid-day. The Mexicans being emboldened from the advantages obtained the preceding day, as well as from a firm belief which possessed them of coming off victorious, made such havock of the enemy, that they strewed the field with dead bodies, defeated them, put them to flight, and pursued them into the city of Azcapozalco, spreading death and terror in every quarter. The Tepanecas, perceiving that even in their houses they could not escape from the fury of the victors, fled to the mountains, which lie from ten to twelve miles distance from Azcapozalco. The proud Maxtlaton, who, until that day, had looked with contempt upon his enemies, and conceived himself superior to all strokes of fortune, seeing the Mexicans had entered his court, and hearing the cries of the vanquished, unable to make any resistance, and fearing to be overtaken if he attempted to fly, hid himself in a *temazcalli*, or cistern; but as the conquerors sought for him every where, they at last found him: no prayers nor tears with which he implored their mercy could prevail; they beat him to death with sticks and stones, and threw his body out into the fields to feed the birds of prey. Such was the tragic end of Maxtlaton before he had completed three years of his tyranny. Thus did they put a stop to his injustice, his cruelty, his ambition, and treachery, and the heavy wrongs done by him to the lawful heir of the kingdom of Acolhuacan, to his brother Tajatzin, and to the kings of Mexico. His memory is odious and execrable among the annals of those nations.

This memorable event which totally altered the system of those kingdoms, signalized the year 1425, of the vulgar era, precisely one century after the foundation of Mexico.

(b) From these expressions of the tyrant it is to be inferred, that when he made himself master of the crown of Azcapozalco, by the assassination of his brother Tajatzin, he resumed the imposition of that tribute on the Mexicans, which had been remitted them by his father Tezozomoc.

The next night the victors were employed in sacking the city, in destroying the houses, and burning the temples, leaving that once so celebrated court in a state of desolation not to be repaired in many years. While the Mexicans and Acolhuas were gathering the fruits of their victory, the detachment of Tlascalans and Huexotzencas took the ancient court of Tenajuca by assault, and the day after joined the army to take the city of *Cuetlachtepec*.

The fugitive Tepanecas, finding themselves reduced to the utmost distress in the mountains, and afraid of being persecuted even there by the victors, at last thought of surrendering themselves and imploring mercy; and that they might be more certain of obtaining it, sent off an illustrious personage, in company with other nobles of the Tepanecan nation, to the king of Mexico. This ambassador humbly demanded pardon of the king in the name of his countrymen, offered obedience to him, and promised that all the Tepanecas would acknowledge him as their lawful lord, and would serve him as vassals. He congratulated them on their good fortune in the midst of the terrible shock which their nation had suffered of being subjected to so amiable a prince, who was endued with so many excellent qualities, and at last concluded his address with an earnest prayer, that they might be granted the favour of life, and liberty to return to their habitations. Itzcoatl received them with the utmost complacency, granted them all they asked, professed himself ready to receive them, not only as his subjects but as his children, and to discharge all the offices of a true father to them; but at the same time threatened them with total extirpation if they violated the fidelity which they swore to him. Their demand being granted, the fugitives returned to rebuild their habitations and attend to their families; and from that time continued always subject to the king of Mexico, affording in their disaster another example of those changes and vicissitudes common to all human affairs. But the whole of the Tepanecan nation was not reduced under obedience to the conqueror: Cojohuacan, a considerable state and city of that people, continued for some time refractory in their conduct as will afterwards appear.

The king Itzcoatl, after this famous conquest, ordered a ratification of the compact entered into between the nobility and the populace; by which the last were bound to perpetual services, which they rendered



BOOK III. dered regularly in future ; but those who by their clamours and complaints had been the cause of discouraging others during battle, were dismembered from the body of the nation and the state of Mexico, and banished for their meanness and cowardice for ever. To Montezuma, and others, who had distinguished themselves in the war, he gave a part of the conquered lands, and assigned a portion also to the priests for their support ; and after having given proper orders for the security and establishment of his dominion, he returned with his army to Mexico, to celebrate the success of his arms with public rejoicings, and to offer thanks to the gods for their supposed protection.

## B O O K IV.

*Re-establishment of the Royal Family of the Chechemecas upon the Throne of Acolhuacan. Foundation of the Monarchy of Tacuba. The Triple Alliance of the Kings of Mexico, Acolhuacan, and Tacuba. Conquests and Death of King Itzcoatl. Conquests and Events of the Mexicans under their Kings Montezuma I. and Axajacatl. War between the Mexicans and Tlatelolcas. Conquest of Tlatelolco, and Death of the King Moquibuix. Government, Death, and Eulogium of Nezahualcojotl, and Accession of his Son Nezahualpilli.*

AS soon as Itzcoatl found himself firm upon his throne, and in quiet possession of Azcapozalco, that he might make a return to the prince Nezahualcojotl for the assistance he gave in the defence of Mexico, and the conquest of the Tepanecas, he determined to aid him in person in the recovery of the kingdom of Acolhuacan. If the king of Mexico had been willing to listen to ambition rather than the calls of honour and justice, he would not have failed to find pretences to make himself master also of that kingdom. Chimalpopoca had been put in possession of Tezcucó, by the tyrant Tezozomoc, and had commanded as lord of that court. Itzcoatl, who had entered into all the rights of his predecessor, might well have considered that state to have been incorporated for some years past with the crown of Mexico. On the other hand he had lawfully acquired Azcapozalco, and subjected the Tepanecas, and appeared to have a title to all the rights of the conquered; which were thought to have been sufficiently established by twelve years possession, and the general acquiescence of the people. But availing himself of no such pretences, he sincerely desired to place Nezahualcojotl on the throne which by lawful succession was due to him, and which he had been deprived of for so many years by the usurpation of the Tepanecas.

## BOOK IV.

SECT. I.  
Re-establishment of the royal family of the Chechemecas on the throne of Acolhuacan.



## BOOK IV.

After the defeat of the Tepanecas there were several cities in the kingdom which were unwilling to submit to the prince, from apprehensions of the chastisement they merited. Huexotla was one of this number, in the neighbourhood of Tezcucó, the lord of which, *Huetznahuatl* (*a*), continued obstinately rebellious. The confederate troops left Mexico, and directing their course through the plains, which at present go by the name of *Santa Marta*, made a halt in Chimalhuacan, from whence the king and prince sent an offer of pardon to those citizens if they would surrender, and threatening to set fire to their city if they persisted in rebellion; but the rebels, instead of accepting the terms offered them, went out in order of battle against the royal army. The conflict was not lasting; the lord of that city being taken by the invincible Montezuma, the rebel force was put to flight, and afterwards came humbly to ask pardon, presenting according to custom, their pregnant women, their children, and old people to the conqueror, to move him to mercy. At length the way to the throne of Acolhuacan being laid open, and the prince being placed there, the auxiliary troops of Huexotzinco and Tlascala were dismissed with many marks of gratitude and a considerable share of the plunder of Axcapozalco.

SECT. II.  
Conquest of  
Cojohuacan  
and other  
places.

From thence the army of the Mexicans and Acolhuas moved against the rebels of Cojohuacan, Atlacuihuajan, and Huitzilipochco. The Cojoacanese had endeavoured to excite all the other Tepanecas to shake off the Mexican yoke. The above mentioned cities, and some neighbouring places, had complied with their solicitations; but others, intimidated by the destruction of Axcapozalco, were afraid of exposing themselves to new dangers. Before they declared their rebellion they began to ill-treat the Mexican women who went to their market, and also any of the men who happened occasionally to call at that city. Upon this Itzcoatl ordered that no Mexican should go to Cojohuacan until the insolence of these rebels was properly punished. Having finished the expedition to Huexotla, he went against them. In the three first battles which were fought, he gained scarcely any other advantage than making them retreat a little; but in the fourth whilst the two armies were fiercely engaged, Montezuma with a set of brave troops which

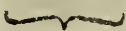
(*a*) The city of Huexotla had been given by Tezozomoc to the king of Tlatelolco, from whom it is probable, therefore, Maxtlaton took it to give to Huitznahuatl.

he had placed in ambuscade, fell with such fury on the rear-guard of the rebels that he soon disordered and forced them to abandon the field and fly to the city. He pursued them, and observing their intention to fortify themselves in the greater temple, he prevented them by taking possession of it, and burnt the turret of that sanctuary. This blow threw the rebels into such consternation, that, quitting their city, they fled to the mountains which lie to the south of Cojohuacan; but even there they were overtaken by the royal troops, and chased for more than thirty miles, until they reached a mountain to the southward of Quauh-nahuac, where the fugitives exhausted with fatigue, and, without any hopes of escape, threw down their arms in token of surrender, and delivered themselves up to the mercy of the conquerors.

This victory made Itzcoatl master of all the states of the Tepanecas, and crowned Montezuma with glory. It is not a little wonderful, say historians, that the greater part of the prisoners taken in that war with Cojohuacan belonged to Montezuma and three brave Acolhuan officers; for all the four, in imitation of the ancient Mexicans in the war against the Xochimilcas, had agreed to cut off a lock of hair from every one they took, and most of the prisoners were found with this mark upon them. Having thus happily closed this expedition, and regulated the affairs of Cojohuacan, and the other subject cities, both the kings returned to Mexico. It was judged proper by the king Itzcoatl to place one of the family of their ancient lords over the Tepanecas, that they might live more peaceably and with less reluctance under the Mexican yoke. This dignity he conferred on *Totoquihuatzin*, son of a son of the tyrant Tezozomoc. It had not appeared that this prince had taken any part in the war against the Mexicans, owing either to some secret attachment which he had to them, or his aversion to his uncle Maxtlaton. Itzcoatl sent for him to Mexico, and created him king of Tlacopan, or rather Tacuba, a considerable city of the Tepanecas, and of all the places to the westward, including also the country of Mazahuacan; but Cojohuacan, Azcapozalco, Mixcoac, and other cities of the Tepanecas, remained immediately subject to the king of Mexico. That crown was given to Totoquihuatzin, on condition of his serving the king of Mexico with all his troops whenever required, for which he was to receive a fifth part of the spoils which they should take from the enemy. Ne-

SECT. III.  
Monarchy of  
Tacuba, and  
alliance of  
the three  
kings.



**BOOK IV.**  zahualcojotl likewise was put in possession of the throne of Acolhuacan, on condition of his giving assistance to the Mexicans in war, for which he was assigned a third part of the plunder, after deducting the share of the king of Tacuba, the other two thirds to be reserved for the king of Mexico. (b) Besides this, both the kings were created honorary electors of the kings of Mexico; which honour was simply confined to the ratifying the election made by four Mexican nobles, who were the real electors. The king of Mexico was reciprocally bound to afford succour to each of the two kings wherever occasion demanded. This alliance of the three kings which remained firm and inviolate for the space of a century, was the cause of the rapid conquests which the Mexicans made hereafter. But this was not the only masterly stroke in politics of the king Itzcoatl; he munificently rewarded all those who had distinguished themselves in the wars, not paying so much regard to their birth or the stations which they occupied, as to the courage which they shewed and the services they performed. Thus it was the hope of reward animated them to the most heroic enterprises, being convinced, that the glory and the advantages to be derived from them would not depend on any accidents of fortune, but on the merit of their actions themselves. By succeeding kings the same policy was practised with infinite service to the state. Having formed this important alliance Itzcoatl set out with the king Nezahualcojotl for Tezcucó, to crown him with his own hand. This ceremony was performed with all possible solemnity in 1426. From thence the king of Mexico returned to his residence, while the other began with the utmost diligence to make reformati<sup>o</sup>ns in the court of Tezcucó.

**SECT IV.**  
Judicious re-  
gulations of  
king Neza-  
hualcojotl.

The kingdom of Acolhuacan was not then in such good order and regulation as Techotlala had left it. The dominion of the Tepanecas, and the revolutions which had happened in the last twenty years had changed the government of the people, weakened the force of the laws, and caused a number of their customs to fall into disuse. Nezahualcojotl, who, besides the attachment which he had to his nation was gifted with uncommon prudence, made such regulations and changes

(b) Several Historians have believed that the kings of Tezcucó and Tacuba were real electors, but the contrary appears evident from history; no occasion ever occurred where they interfered or were present at an election, as we shall shew hereafter.

in the state, that in a little time it became more flourishing than it had ever been under any of his predecessors. He gave a new form to the councils which had been established by his grandfather. He conferred offices on persons the fittest for them. One council determined causes purely civil, in which, among others, five lords who had proved constantly faithful to him in his adversity, assisted. Another council judged of criminal causes, at which the two princes his brothers, men of high integrity, presided. The council of war was composed of the most distinguished military characters, among whom Icotihuacan, son-in-law to the king and also one of the thirteen nobles of the kingdom, had the first rank. The treasury-board consisted of the king's majordomos, and the first merchants of the court. The principal majordomos who took charge of the tributes and other parts of the royal income, were three in number. Societies similar to academies were instituted for poetry, astronomy, music, painting, history, and the art of divination, and he invited the most celebrated professors of his kingdom to his court, who met on certain days to communicate their discoveries and inventions; and for each of these arts and sciences, although little advanced, schools were appropriated. To accommodate the mechanic branches, he divided the city of Tezcuco into thirty odd divisions, and to every branch assigned a district; so that the goldsmiths inhabited one division, the sculptors another, the weavers another, &c. To cherish religion he raised new temples, created ministers for the worship of their gods, gave them houses, and appointed them revenues for their support, and the expences which were necessary at festivals and sacrifices. To augment the splendor of his court he constructed noble edifices both within and without the city, and planted new gardens and woods, which were in preservation many years after the conquest, and shew still some traces of former magnificence.

While the king of Acolhuacan was occupied in new regulations of his court, the Xochimilcas, afraid lest the Mexicans in future might be desirous of making themselves also masters of their state, as well as of the Tepanecas, assembled a council to deliberate on the measures they should take to prevent such a disgrace. Some were of opinion they should voluntarily submit themselves to the dominion of the Mexicans, as at all events in time they would be obliged to succumb to that power:

the

SECT. V.  
Conquest of  
Xochimilco,  
of Cuitlahu-  
ac, and other  
cities.



BOOK IV. the judgment of others however prevailed, who thought it would be better to declare war against them before new conquests rendered them more formidable. The king of Mexico no sooner heard of their resolution than he set out a large army, under command of the celebrated Montezuma, and sent advice to the king of Tacuba to join with his troops. The battle was fought on the confines of Xochimilco. Although the number of the Xochimilcas was great, they did not however engage with such good order as the Mexicans, by which means they were quickly defeated, and retreated to their city. The Mexicans having pursued them, entered it, and set fire to the turrets of the temples and other edifices. The citizens not being able to resist their attack, fled to the mountains; but being even there besieged by the Mexicans, they at last surrendered. Montezuma was received by the Xochimilchan priests with the music of flutes and drums; and the whole expedition completed in about eleven days. The king of Mexico went immediately to take possession of that city, which, as we have before mentioned, next to the royal residence, was the most considerable in the vale of Mexico, where he was acknowledged and proclaimed king, received the obedience of these new subjects, and promised to love them as a father, and watch in future over their welfare.

The bad success of the Xochimilcas was not sufficient to intimidate those of Cuitlahuac; on the contrary, the advantageous situation of their city, which was built on a little island in the lake of Chalco, encouraged them to provoke the Mexicans to war. Itzcoatl was for pouring upon them with all the forces of Mexico; but Montezuma undertook to humble their pride with a smaller body; for which purpose he raised some companies of youths, particularly those who had been bred in the seminaries of Mexico; and after having exercised them in arms, and instructed them in the order and mode which they were to follow in that war, he prepared a suitable number of vessels, and set out with this armament against the Cuitlahuachese. We are totally ignorant of the particulars of this expedition; but we know that in seven days the city was taken and reduced under the obedience of the king of Mexico, and that the youths returned loaded with spoils, and brought with them a number of prisoners to be sacrificed to the god of war. We do not know the year either in which this war happened,  
nor

nor the time of that of Quauhnhuac, but it appears to have been towards the end of the reign of Itzcoatl.

The lord of Xiuhtepec, a city of the country of the Tlahuicas, more than thirty miles to the southward of Mexico, had requested of his neighbour, the lord of Quauhnhuac, one of his daughters to wife, which demand was granted. The lord of Tlaltexcal made afterwards the same pretensions, to whom she was immediately given, notwithstanding the promises made to the first, either on account of some offence which he had done to the father, or some other reason of which we are ignorant. The lord of Xiuhtepec being highly offended at such an insult, desired to be revenged; but being unable for this himself, on account of his inferiority in forces, he implored the assistance of the king of Mexico, promising to be his constant friend and ally, and to serve him whenever he should require it with his person and his people. Itzcoatl esteeming the war just, and the occasion fit for the extension of his dominions, armed his subjects, and called upon those of Acolhuacan and Tacuba. So great an army was certainly necessary, the lord of Quauhnhuac being very powerful, and his city very strong, as the Spaniards afterwards experienced when they besieged it. Itzcoatl commanded that the whole army should attack the city at once, the Mexicans by Ocuilla on the west side, the Tepanecas by Tlatzacapulco on the north, and the Tezcucans together with the Xiuhtepechese by Tlalquitenanco on the east and south. The Quauhnhuachese trusting to the natural strength of the city, were willing to stand the attack. The first who began it were the Tepanecas, who were vigorously repulsed; but all the other troops immediately advancing, the citizens were forced to surrender and subject themselves to the king of Mexico, to whom they paid annually, from that time forward, a tribute in cotton, pepper, and other commodities, which we shall mention hereafter. By the conquest of that large, pleasant, and strong city, which was the capital of the Tlahuicas, a great part of that country fell under the dominion of the Mexican king; a little after to these conquests were added Quantititlan and Toltitlan, considerable cities fifteen miles to the northward of Mexico; but any other particulars we know not.

In this manner a city, which some short time before was tributary to the Tepanecas, and not much esteemed by other nations, in less than



**BOOK IV.** twelve years found itself enabled to command those who had ruled over it and the people who thought themselves greatly superior. Of such importance to the prosperity of a nation is the wisdom and bravery of its chief. At length in the year 1436 of the vulgar era, in a very advanced age, after a reign full of glory, the great Itzcoatl died: a king justly celebrated by the Mexicans for his singular endowments, and the unequalled services he rendered them. He served the nation upwards of thirty years as general, and governed thirteen as their sovereign. Besides rescuing them from the subjection of the Tepanecas, extending their dominions, replacing the royal family of the Chechemecas on the throne of Acolhuacan, enriching his court with the plunder of conquered nations, and having laid, in the triple alliance which he formed, the foundation of their future greatness, he added to the nobleness and splendor of the nation by many new edifices. After the conquest of Cuitlahuac he built, among others, a temple to the goddess *Cihuacoatl*, and some time afterwards another to *Huitzilopochtli*. His funeral was attended with unusual pomp and the greatest demonstrations of grief, and his ashes reposed in the same sepulchre with his ancestors.

SECT. VI.  
Montezuma I. fifth  
king of  
Mexico.

The four electors did not long deliberate on the choice of a new king; there being no surviving brother of the late sovereign, the election consequently fell on one of his grandsons; and no one appeared more deserving than Montezuma Ilhuicamina, son of Huitzilihuitl, not less on account of his personal virtues than the important services he had done the nation. He was elected with general applause, advice of which being given to the two allied kings, they not only confirmed the election, but passed many praises on the elected, and sent him presents worthy of his rank and their esteem. After the usual ceremonies and the congratulatory speeches of the priests, the nobles, and the military, much rejoicing took place, with entertainments, balls, and illuminations. Before his coronation, either from an established law of the country, or his own particular desire, he went to war with his enemies to make prisoners for a sacrifice on the occasion. He resolved that these should be of the Chalchese nation, to revenge the insults and the injurious treatment he had received from them when returning from Tezcucó, in the character of ambassador, he had been taken and carried to the prison

prison of Chalco. He went against them therefore in person, defeated them, and made many prisoners ; but did not then subject the whole of that state to the crown of Mexico, that he might not retard his coronation. On the day appointed for that solemnity the tributes and presents which were sent to him from conquered places, were brought into Mexico. The king's major-domos and the receivers of the royal revenues preceded, after whom came those who carried the presents, who were divided into as many companies as there were people who sent them, and so regular and orderly in their procession as to afford infinite pleasure to the spectators. They brought gold, silver, beautiful feathers, wearing apparel, great variety of game, and a vast quantity of provisions. It is more than probable, although historians do not mention it, that the other two allied kings and many other strangers of distinction were present, besides a great concourse of people from all the places in the vale of Mexico.

As soon as Montezuma found himself on the throne, his first care was to erect a great temple in that part of the city which they called *Huitznabua*c. The allied kings, whom he requested to assist him, furnished him with such plenty of materials and workmen, that in a short time the building was finished and consecrated. During the time of its construction the new war against Chalco appears to have happened. The Chalchefe besides the injuries which they had already done to Montezuma, provoked his indignation afresh by a cruel and barbarous act, deserving the execration of all posterity. Two of the royal princes of Tezcuco having gone a hunting on the mountains which overlook the plains of Chalco, while employed in the chase and separated from their retinue with only three Mexican lords, fell in with a troop of Chalchefe soldiers, who thinking they would please the cruel passions of their master, made them prisoners and carried them to Chalco. The savage lord of that city, who was probably the same Toteotzin by whom Montezuma had been so ill treated, paying no regard to the noble rank of the prisoners, nor dreading the fatal consequences of his inhuman resolution, put all the five instantly to death ; and that he might always be able to gratify his sight with a spectacle in which his cruelty delighted, he caused their bodies to be salted and dried ; and when they were thus sufficiently prepared, he placed them in a hall of his house,

SECT. VII.  
Atrocious act  
of the Chal-  
chefe.



## BOOK IV.

to serve as supporters of the pine torches which were burned to give light in the evening.

The report of so horrid an act spread immediately over all the country. The king of Tezcucó, whose heart was pierced with the intelligence, demanded the aid of the allied kings to revenge the death of his sons. Montezuma determined that the Tezcucan army should attack the city of Chalco by land, whilst he and the king of Tacuba with their troops made an attack on it by water; for which purpose he collected an infinite number of vessels to transport his people, and commanded the armament in person. The Chalchese notwithstanding the number of the enemy, made a vigorous resistance; for besides being themselves warriors, on this occasion desperation heightened their courage. The lord of that state himself, although so old that he could not walk, caused himself to be carried in a litter to animate his subjects with his presence and voice. They were however totally defeated, the city was sacked, and the lord of it punished in a most exemplary manner for his many atrocious crimes. The spoils, according to the agreement made in the time of king Itzcoatl, were divided among the three kings, but the city and the whole of the state remained from that time subject to the king of Mexico. This victory, as historians relate, was owing chiefly to the bravery of the youth Axoquentzin, a son of Nezahualcojotl.

SECT. VIII.  
Marriage of  
Nezahualco-  
jotl with a  
princess of  
Tacuba.

This famous king, although he had in early life several wives and many children by them, had not yet conferred on any of them the dignity of queen, as they had been all slaves or daughters of his subjects (c). Judging it now necessary to take a wife worthy of being raised to this high rank, and who might bear a successor to him in the crown of Acolhuacan, he married Matlalcihuatzin daughter of the king of Tacuba, a beautiful and modest virgin, who was conducted to Tezcucó by her father and the king of Mexico. On occasion of the nuptials there were rejoicings for eighty days, and a year after a son was born of this marriage, who was named Nezahualpilli, and succeeded, as will appear hereafter, to that crown. A little time after, equally great

(c) Nezahualcojotl married in his youth Nezahualxochitl, as we have already mentioned, who, being of the royal family of Mexico, was entitled to the honour of being queen; but she died before the prince recovered his crown from the usurper.

rejoicings

rejoicings took place, on occasion of the building of the *Hueitecpan* or great palace being completed, of whose magnificence the Spaniards were witnesses. These festivals, at which the two allied kings were present, were concluded with a most sumptuous entertainment to which the nobility of the three courts were invited. At this entertainment Nezahualcojotl made his musicians sing to the accompaniment of instruments, an ode which he had composed himself, which began thus; "*Xochitl mamani in abuebuetitlan*," the subject of which was a comparison of the shortness of life and of its pleasures, with the fleeting bloom of a flower. The pathetic touches of the song drew tears from the audience; in whom, according to their love of life, the anticipation of death made proportionate ideas of melancholy spring in the mind.

Montezuma having returned to his court, found himself obliged to crush an enemy, whose neighbourhood and almost domestic situation might make him prove the more dangerous to the state. *Quauhtlatoa*, the third king of Tlatelolco, instigated by ambition to extend his dominions, or from envy of the happiness of his neighbour and rival, had formerly been desirous of taking away the life of king Itzcoatl, and that he might prove successful, having no sufficient forces of his own, had entered into a confederacy with other neighbouring lords; but all his attempts were vain, as Itzcoatl was apprised of his intentions, prepared in time for defence, and damped his courage. From that time, such a distrust and enmity sprung up between the Mexicans and Tlatelolcos, that they continued for years without any intercourse, except among some of the common people, who stole off occasionally to the markets. Under the reign of Montezuma, *Quauhtlatoa* resumed his hostile intentions; but they were not again left unpunished; Montezuma having got advice of them, prevented the blow by a vigorous attack on Tlatelolco, in which the petty king was killed, although the city was not then made subject to the government of Mexico. The Tlatelolcos elected the brave *Moquibuix* king, in the choice of whom the king of Mexico himself must have had considerable influence.

Montezuma having rid himself of this dangerous neighbour, set out for the province of the *Cohuixcas*, which lies to the southward of Mexi-

SECT. IX.  
Death of  
*Quauhtlatoa*  
king of Tla-  
telolco.

SECT. X.  
Conquests of  
Montezuma.



## BOOK IV.

co, in order to revenge the loss of some Mexicans who had been put to death by that people. This glorious expedition added to his crown the states of Huaxtepec, Jauhtepec, Tepoztlan, Jacapichtla, Totolapan, Tlalcocauhuitlan, Chilapan, which were more than a hundred and fifty miles distant from the court, Coixco, Oztomantla, Tlachmallac, and many others; then turning to the west, he conquered Tzompahuacan, bringing under subjection to the crown of Mexico both the great country of the Cohuixcas, who had been the authors of the deaths above-mentioned, and many other neighbouring states which had provoked his resentment probably by similar insults. Upon his return to his court he enlarged the temple of Huitzilopochtli, and adorned it with the spoils of those nations. These conquests were made in the nine first years of his reign.

SECT. XI.  
The inundation of Mexico.

In the tenth year, which was the 1446 of the vulgar era, a great inundation happened in Mexico, occasioned by excessive rains, which swelled the waters of the lake till they overflowed and laid the city so much under water as to destroy many houses; and the streets becoming impassable, boats were made use of in every quarter. Montezuma much distressed by the accident, had recourse to the king of Tezcucó, hoping his penetration might suggest some remedy to this calamity. That discerning king advised a great dyke to be made to keep out the water, and laid down a plan of it, and pointed out the place where it should be made. His counsel was approved by Montezuma, who commanded it to be followed with instant execution. He ordered the subjects of Azcapozalco, Cojohuacan, and Xochimilco, to provide so many thousand large flakes, and the people of other parts to furnish the necessary stones. He summoned also to this work the inhabitants of Tacuba, Iztapalapan, Colhuacan, and Tenajueca, and the lords and the kings themselves, engaged themselves first in the fatigue; from their example, their subjects were animated to such activity, that in a short time the work was perfectly completed which must otherwise have been many years in accomplishing. The dyke was nine miles in length, and eleven cubits in breadth, and was composed of two parallel palisades, the space between which was entirely filled up with stone and sand. The greatest difficulty which occurred, was in being obliged occasionally to work within the lake, especially in some places where it was of a considerable

siderable depth ; but this was overcome by the skill of the conductor, and the perseverance of the labourers. This dyke was certainly of great use to the city, although it did not entirely protect it from inundations ; that, however, is not wonderful, as the Spaniards, although they employed European engineers, were not able to effect its security from them, after labouring two centuries and a half upon it, and expending many millions of sequins. Whilst this work was going on, the Chalchefe rebelled, but were quickly brought under obedience again, although not without the loss of some Mexican officers.

The accident of the inundation was soon followed by a famine ; which arose from the harvest of maize, in the years 1448 and 1449, being exceedingly stinted ; the frost having attacked the ears while they were young and tender. In the year 1450, the crop was totally lost from the want of water. In 1451, besides having unfavourable seasons, there was a scarcity of grain for seed, so much of it being consumed on account of the scarcity of preceding harvests ; from which in 1452, the necessities of the people became so great, that as the liberality of their king and the nobles was not sufficient to relieve them, although they opened their granaries to assist them, they were obliged to purchase the necessities of life, with the price of their liberty. Montezuma being unable to relieve his subjects from their distress, permitted them to go to other countries to procure their support ; but knowing that some of them made slaves of themselves for two or three days sustenance only, he published a proclamation, in which he commanded that no woman should sell herself for less than four hundred ears of maize, and no man for less than five hundred. But nothing could stop the destructive consequences of famine. Of those who went to seek relief in other countries some died of hunger on their way. Others who sold themselves for food, never returned to their native country. The greater part of the Mexican populace supported themselves like their ancestors, on the water-fowl, the herbs growing in the marshes, and the insects and small fish which they caught in the lake. The following year was not so unfavourable, and at length, in 1454, which was a secular year, there was a most plentiful harvest of maize, and likewise of pulse, and every sort of fruit.

SECT. XII.  
Famine in  
Mexico.

But



BOOK IV.  
 SECT. XIII.  
 New conquests and  
 death of  
 Montezuma.

But the Mexicans were not permitted to enjoy the season of plenty in quietness, being obliged to go to war against Atonaltzin, lord of the city and state of Coaixtlahuacan, in the country of the Mixtecas. This was a powerful lord, who, for some reasons unknown, would not allow to any Mexican a passage through his lands, and whenever they happened to come there shewed them the worst treatment he could. Montezuma being highly offended with such hostility, sent an embassy to him, to know the motive of his conduct, and threatened him with war if he did not make a proper apology. Atonaltzin received the embassy with scorn, and ordering some of his riches to be set before the ambassadors, "Bear," said he, "this present to your king, and tell him, from it he may know how much my subjects give me, and how great the love is which they have for me; that I willingly accept of war, by which it shall be decided whether my subjects are to pay tribute to the king of Mexico, or the Mexicans to me." Montezuma immediately informed the two allied kings of this insolent answer, and sent a considerable army against that lord, who was well prepared, and met them on the frontiers of his state. As soon as the armies came in sight of each other, they engaged; but the Mixtecas rushed with such fury on the Mexicans, that they were thrown into disorder, and forced to abandon their enterprize.

The pride of Atonaltzin increased with the victory, but foreseeing that the Mexicans would return with a more numerous force, he demanded assistance from the Huexotzincas and the Tlascalans, who readily, granted it, rejoicing in having an opportunity of interrupting the success of the Mexican arms. Montezuma, who was much troubled at the unhappy issue of the war, meditated the re-establishment of the honour of his crown, for which purpose he speedily collected a numerous and formidable army, resolving to command it himself, together with his two royal allies; but before they set out on their march, he received intelligence that the Tlascalans and Huexotzincas had attacked Tlachquiahco, a place in Mixteca, had killed all the Mexican garrison there, and deprived some of the citizens of their lives, and others of their liberty. Montezuma, now warm with indignation, marched towards Mixteca. Neither his own power, nor the assistance which he received from his friends, were of any avail to Atonaltzin.

In the very first conflict his army was totally defeated, many of his soldiers were killed, and almost all his confederates; the few who escaped the fury of the Mexicans fell by the hands of the Mixtecas, in revenge for the unfortunate issue of the battle. Atonaltzin surrendered to Montezuma, who not only remained in possession of the city, and the state of Coaixtlahuacan, but proceeding farther made himself master of Tochtepec, Tzapotlan, Tototlan, and Chinantla, and in the two following years of Cozamaloapan, and Quauh-tochto. The cause of these last wars was the same with many others, namely, the inhabitants of these places having in time of peace put some merchants and couriers of Mexico to death.

The expedition undertaken in 1457 against *Cuetlachtlan*, or Cotaſta, proved far more difficult, and more celebrated. This province situated as we mentioned before on the coast of the Mexican gulf, and founded, or at least inhabited, by the Olmecas, who were driven out by the Tlaſcalans, was extremely populous. We are ignorant of the occasion of the war; we know, however, that the Cotaſteſe foreſeeing the ſtorm which threatened them, called the Huexotzincas and Tlaſcalans to their aſſiſtance. The two laſt feeling high reſentment for the loſs of Coaixtlahuacan, and thiſtling for revenge, not only agreed to aſſiſt the other, but perſuaded the Cholulans alſo to enter into the confederacy. Theſe three republics ſent numerous forces to Cotaſta to wait for the enemy. Montezuma, on his part, raiſed a great and brilliant army, in which the flower of the nobility of Mexico, Acolhua, Tlatelolco, and Tepaneca enlisted. Among other perſons of diſtinction in this army were *Axajacatl*, the general, *Tizoc*, and *Abuitzotl*, all three brothers, and of the royal family of Mexico, who ſucceſſively filled the throne after Montezuma their couſin. There were alſo the lords of Colhuacan and Tenaycuca; but the moſt reſpectable character was Moquihuix, king of Tlatelolco, ſucceſſor to the unfortunate Quauh-tlatoa. When the army left Mexico, intelligence had not arrived of the confederacy of the three republics with the Cotaſteſe; as ſoon as Montezuma knew it, he ſent meſſengers to his generals not to proceed, but to return inſtantly to his court. The generals entered into a conſultation: ſome were of opinion that they ought to obey the order of their ſovereign without heſitation; others thought they were  
not



## BOOK IV.

not under obligation to submit to an order, which would throw such reflection on their honour, as the nobles must be disgraced and degraded if they shunned engaging upon an occasion which was so fit to shew their bravery. The first opinion prevailed, as being the most safe; but in setting out on their march to return to Mexico, Moquihuix the king, addressed them: "Let those return, whose spirit can suffer them to turn their backs upon the enemy, whilst I with my people of Tlatelolco alone bear off the honour of the victory." This resolute determination of Moquihuix, so roused and fired the other generals, that they all resolved to meet the danger. At length they joined battle with the enemy, in which the Cotahtese although they fought courageously, were nevertheless vanquished, with all their allies: of these last, the greater part were left on the field; of both, six thousand two hundred were made prisoners, who were soon after sacrificed at the festival of the consecration of the *Quaxicalco*, or the religious edifice appropriated for the preservation of the skulls of the victims. The whole of that province remained subject to the king of Mexico, who established a garrison there, to keep that people in obedience to the crown. This great victory was principally owing to the bravery of Moquihuix; and even until our day, a Mexican song or ode has been preserved, which was at that time composed in his praise (*e*). Montezuma more pleased with the happy fortune of the war, than offended at the disobedience to his orders, rewarded the king of Tlatelolco by giving him one of his cousins to wife, who was the sister of the above mentioned princes, Axayacatl, Tizoc, and Ahuitzotl.

In the mean while the Chalchese were daily rendering themselves more deserving of chastisement, not solely by rebellion, but also by the commission of other new offences. At this time they had the audacity to take the brother of the king Montezuma himself, who was, according to what we can learn, lord of Ehecatepec, with some other Mexicans, prisoners. A crime of this nature committed on a person so nearly related in blood to their sovereign, appears to have been a measure contrived by them to get rid of the power of the Mexicans, and make the city of Chalco the rival of Mexico; as they were desirous of making that

(*e*) Boturini makes mention of this ode, which he had, among other manuscripts and paintings, in his very valuable museum.

lord,

lord, king of Chalco; and frequently, though in vain, proposed it to him. He perceiving them fixed in their resolution, told them he would accept the crown they offered; but, that the act of his exaltation might be the more solemn, he desired they would plant in the market-place, one of the highest trees, and place a scaffold upon it, from which he might be viewed by all. Every thing was done as he requested: having assembled the Mexicans around the tree, he ascended the scaffold with a bunch of flowers in his hand; then from the height, in the view of an immense concourse of people, he thus addressed his own people: "Ye know well, my brave Mexicans, that the Chalchese wish "to make me their king; but it is not agreeable to our God that I "should betray our native country, I chuse rather to teach you by my "example, to place higher value on fidelity to it, than upon life itself." Having spoke thus, he threw himself headlong from the scaffold. This act, though barbarous, was agreeable to the ideas which the ancients entertained of magnanimity, and was so much less censurable than that of Cato and others, celebrated by antiquity, as the motive was nobler and the courage of the Mexican greater. The Chalchese were so enraged at the deed, that they fell instantly on the other Mexicans and killed them with their darts. The next evening they heard by chance the melancholy screaming of an owl, which, as they were extremely addicted to superstition, was interpreted, a fatal omen of their approaching ruin. They were not deceived in the anticipation of their disasters; for Montezuma, highly provoked by their rebellion and their enormous offences, immediately declared war, and caused fires to be kindled on the tops of the mountains, as a signal of the punishment to which he condemned the rebels. He then marched with his army against that province, and made such havock of the enemy as to leave it almost depopulated. Immense numbers were slaughtered, and those who escaped with life, fled into the caves of the mountains which rise above the plains of Chalco; some, to remove themselves still further from danger, passing to the other side of the mountains, took refuge in Huexotzinco and Atlixco. The city of Chalco was sacked and plundered. The fury of revenge was succeeded in Montezuma, as is usual to noble minds, by feelings of compassion for the unfortunate. He proclaimed a general pardon to all the fugitives, particularly for the relief of the



**BOOK IV.** aged, the women, and the children, inviting them to return without fear to their native country; nor content with that only, he ordered his troops to traverse the mountains, to call back the wanderers who had fled from man to find shelter among the wild beasts, and woods. Many returned, who were distributed in Amaquemecan, Tlalmanalco, and other places; but many resigned themselves to their fate in the mountains, from distrust of the pardon, or the excess of their despair. One part of the country of Chalco was divided by Montezuma among the officers who had the most distinguished themselves in the war.

After this expedition the Mexicans conquered Tamazollan, Piaztlan, Xilotepec, Acatlan, and other places. By such rapid conquests Montezuma so enlarged his dominions, that in the east he extended them as far as the gulf of Mexico; in the south-east, to the centre of the country of the Mixtecas; in the south, as far as Chilapan and something beyond it; in the west, to the valley of Toluca; in the north-west, to the centre of the country of the Otomies; and in the north, as far as the termination of the vale of Mexico.

But while so attentive to war, this famous king neglected not what concerned internal polity and religion. He published new laws, added to the splendor of his court, and introduced there many ceremonials not known to his predecessors. He erected a large temple to the god of war, ordained many new religious rites, and increased the number of the priests. The interpreter of Mendoza's collection adds, that Montezuma was himself sober, and remarkably rigorous in punishing drunkenness; and that by his justice and prudence, and the propriety of his actions, he made his subjects fear and love him. At last, after a very glorious reign of twenty-eight years and some months, in 1464 he died, universally regretted. His funeral was celebrated with more than ordinary solemnity, in proportion to the increased magnificence of the court, and the power of the nation.

SECT. XIV.  
Axajacatl,  
sixth king of  
Mexico.

Before his death he assembled the chief nobility of his court, and exhorted them to agree among themselves, and prayed of the electors that they would, after his death, chuse Axayacatl, whom he thought the fittest person to promote the glory of the Mexicans. Whether it was from deference to the opinion of a king who had gained so much desert from his nation, or because they knew the merit of Axayacatl, the

the electors chose him in preference to his elder brother. He was the son of Tezozomoc, who had been the brother of the three kings who preceded Montezuma, and a son, as well as they, of king Acamapitzin.

After the festival of the election, the new king, after the example of his predecessors, went to war, to collect victims for a sacrifice at his coronation. He made his expedition against the province of Tecuantepec, situated on the coast of the Pacific Ocean, four hundred miles to the south-east, from Mexico. The people of Tecuantepec were well prepared, and in confederacy with their neighbours, to oppose the attempts of the Mexicans. In the keen battle which took place, Axayacatl, who commanded as general, pretended flight, to lead the enemy into an ambuscade. They pursued the Mexicans, triumphing in their victory, when suddenly they found themselves attacked behind by one part of the Mexican army which came from their ambush, and attacked in front by those who were flying and had now faced about upon them; harraßed thus on both sides, they were soon totally defeated. The enemy, who were able to save themselves by flight, were pursued by the Mexicans as far as the city of Tecuantepec, to which they set fire, and taking advantage of the confusion and consternation of the people, they extended their conquests as far as Coatulco, a maritime place, the port of which was much frequented by the vessels of the Spaniards, in the next century. From this expedition Axayacatl returned enriched with spoils, and was crowned with the greatest pomp, there being a procession of the tribute-bearers, and a sacrifice made of the prisoners. In the first years of his reign, following the steps of his predecessor, he applied himself to the extension of his conquests. In 1467 he re-conquered Cotaßta and Tochtepec. In 1468, he obtained a complete victory over the Huexotzincas and Atlixcas; and on his return to Mexico, he undertook the building of a temple, which he called *Coatlan*. The Tlatelolcos erected another in rivalry, which they called *Coaxcolotl*; by which the discord between these two kings was revived, which turned out, as we shall see hereafter, fatal to the Tlatelolcos. In 1469, Totoquihuatzin, the first king of Tacuba, died, who, for upwards of forty years, while he held that small kingdom, was constantly faithful to the king of Mexico, and served him in almost all the wars which he undertook against the enemies of the state. He was succeed-



## BOOK IV.

## SECT. XV.

Death, and  
eulogium of  
king Neza-  
hualcojotl.

ed in the throne by his son Chimalpopoca, who resembled him no less in his bravery than his fidelity.

The loss which the Mexicans suffered, in 1470, by the death of the great Nezahualcojotl king of Acolhuacan, was far more afflicting. This king was one of the most renowned heroes of ancient America. His courage, which in his youth was rather fool-hardiness, however great it appeared, was still one of the less noble faculties of his soul. His fortitude and constancy during the thirteen years which he continued deprived of the crown and persecuted by the usurper, were truly wonderful. His integrity in the administration of justice was inflexible. To make his nation more civilized, and to correct the disorders introduced into the kingdom in the time of the tyrant, he published eighty laws, which were afterwards compiled by his celebrated descendant D. Ferdinando D'Alba Ixtlilxochitl in his manuscript, entitled, *Storia de' Signori Cicimechi*. He ordained that no suit, civil or criminal, should be prolonged more than eighty days, or four Mexican months. Every eighty days there was a great assembly in the royal palace, at which the judges and delinquents attended. Whatever causes had been left undecided in the four preceding months, were infallibly determined on that day; and those who were convicted of any crime, immediately and without any remission, received punishment proportioned to their offence, in presence of the whole assembly. To different crimes, different punishments belonged; some were punished with the utmost rigour, particularly adultery, sodomy, theft, homicide, drunkenness, and treason to the state. If we are to credit the Tezcucan historians, he put four of his own sons to death, for committing incest with their mother-in-law.

His clemency to the unfortunate was also remarkable. It was forbid, under pain of death, throughout the kingdom, to take any thing from another's field; and so strict was this law, that the stealing of seven ears of maize was sufficient to incur the penalty. In order to provide, in some measure, for necessitous travellers, without breach of this law, Nezahualcojotl commanded that both sides of the principal highways should be sown with maize and other seeds, with the fruits of which those who were in want might supply themselves. A great part of his revenue was spent in relief of the poor, particularly those

who

who were aged, sick, and in widowhood. To prevent the consumption of the woods, he prescribed limits to those who cut wood, and forbid trespasses on them, under severe penalties. Being desirous of knowing if this prohibition was strictly observed, he went out one day in disguise, with one of his brothers, and took the way to the foot of the neighbouring mountains, where the boundaries prescribed, commenced. There he found a youth employed in gathering the small chips which remained of some wood that had been cut, and asked him why he did not go into the woods to cut fuel. Because the king, said the lad, has forbid the trespassing on these limits, and if we do not obey him he will punish us severely. Neither importunity nor promises which the king made, were sufficient to make him willing to transgress. The compassion excited in him by this poor youth, moved him to enlarge the former limits he had fixed.

He was particularly zealous in his attention to the faithful administration of justice, and that none from their necessities might plead an excuse for being corrupted by any of the contending parties, he ordered the support of all his ministers and judges, their clothing, and every necessary according to the rank and quality of the person, to be supplied out of the royal treasury. So much was expended annually in his household, in the support of his ministers and magistrates, and in relief of the poor, it would be totally incredible, nor should we be bold enough to write it, were it not certified by the original paintings, seen and examined by the first religious missionaries, who were employed in the conversion of these people, and confirmed by the testimony of a third grandson of this same king, who being converted to christianity was baptized by the name of Don Antonio Pimentel (*f*). The annual expenditure made by Nezahualcojotl reduced to Castilian measure, was therefore as follows:

Of Maize,	-	-	-	4,900,300 Fanegas ( <i>g</i> ).
Of Cocoa nuts,	-	-	-	2,744,000 Fan.
Of Chili or common pepper and Tomate,				3,200 Fan.
Of Chiltecpin, or small pepper,	-			240 Fan.

(*f*) Torquemada the historian, had these paintings in his hands, by his own testimony.

(*g*) The Fanega is a Spanish measure for dry goods, containing about a hundred Spanish pounds, or one hundred and thirty Roman pounds.



BOOK IV.	Of salt,	-	-	-	-	1,300 large baskets.
	Of Turkeys,	-	-	-	-	8,000.

The quantity consumed of Chia, French beans, and other leguminous plants; of deer also, and ducks, quails, and other birds, was infinite and numberless. Every person will easily comprehend how great the extent of population must have been to amass such a vast quantity of maize and cocoas; particularly as it was necessary to procure this last by commerce with warm countries, there being no soil in all the kingdom of Acolhuacan fit for the culture of this plant. During one half of the year or nine Mexican months, fourteen cities furnished such provisions, and fifteen other cities supplied them during the other half year. Young men were employed to carry on their backs the fuel which was consumed in the royal palace, in amazing quantities (*g*).

The progress made by this celebrated king, in the arts and sciences, was such as is to be expected from a great genius who is without books to study, or masters to instruct him. He excelled in the poetry of these nations, and produced many compositions which met with universal applause. In the sixteenth century, his sixty hymns, composed in honour of the Creator of Heaven, were celebrated even among the Spaniards. Two of his odes or songs, translated into Spanish verse by his descendant Don Ferdinando d'Alba Ixtlilxochitl, have been preserved unto our time (*b*). One of these was wrote some time after the ruin of Azcapozalco. The subject of it was similar to the other which we already mentioned; it lamented the inconstancy of human greatness, in the person of the tyrant Tezozomoc, whom he compared to a large and stately tree which had extended its roots through many countries, and spread the shade of its green branches over all the lands of the empire; but at last, worm-eaten and wasted, fell to the earth, never to resume its youthful verdure.

(*g*) The fourteen cities charged with furnishing provisions for the first half year were Tezcuco, Huexotla, Coatlichan, Atenco, Chiauhitla, Tezonjocan, Papalotla, Tepetlaoztoc, Acolman, Tepechpan, Xaltocan, Chimalhuacan, Iztapalocan, and Coatepec. The other fifteen were Otompan, Aztaquemecan, Teotihuacan, Cempoallan, Axapocheo, Tlalanapan, Tepopolco, Tizajocan, Ahuatepec, Oztoticpac, Quauhtlatzincó, Cojoac, Oztotlatlauhean, Achichillacachocan, and Tetliztacac.

(*b*) Cav. Boturini had two odes composed by Nezahualcojotl; we wished much for them to publish them in this history.

Nothing, however, gave so much delight to Nezahualcojotl, as the study of nature. He acquired some ideas of astronomy, by the frequent observations which he made of the course of the stars. He applied himself besides, to the knowledge of plants and animals; but finding he could not keep the natives of other climes alive at his court, he caused paintings to be made from the life, of all the plants and animals of the country of Anahuac; to which paintings the celebrated Hernandez bears testimony, who saw and made use of them: paintings more useful and more worthy of a royal palace than those which represent the dark mythology of the Grecians. He was a curious enquirer into the causes of the effects by which nature excited his admiration, and frequent observation in that way, led him to discover the weakness of idolatry. To his sons, he said privately, that although in conformity with the people they paid external adoration to the idols, they should, yet, in their hearts detest the worship which was so deserving of mockery, as it was directed to lifeless forms; that he acknowledged no other God than the Creator of Heaven, and he did not forbid idolatry in his kingdom, though inclined to do so, that he might not be blamed for contradicting the doctrines of his ancestors. He prohibited the sacrifice of human victims; but perceiving afterwards how difficult it was to make a nation change its ancient and long-rooted ideas in matters of religion, he again permitted them, but commanded, under severe penalties, that these should be none but prisoners of war. He erected in honour of the Creator of Heaven, a high tower, consisting of nine floors. The last floor was dark and vaulted, painted within of a blue colour, and ornamented with cornices of gold. In this tower resided constantly some men whose office was to strike, at certain hours of the day, plates of the finest metal, at which signal the king kneeled down to pray to the Creator of Heaven. In honour likewise of this God, at a certain time of the year he always observed a fast (*k*).

The elevated genius of this king, actuated by the great love he had to his people, produced so enlightened his capital, that in future times it was considered as the nursery of the arts and the centre of

(*k*) All the above mentioned anecdotes are extracted from the valuable manuscripts of Don Ferdinando d'Alba; he being fourth grandson of that king, received, probably, many traditions from his fathers and grand-fathers.

cultivation.



## BOOK IV.

cultivation. Tezcuco was the city where the Mexican language was spoken in the greatest purity and perfection, where the best artists were found, and where poets, orators, and historians most abounded (1). The Mexicans and other nations adopted many of their laws; and if we may be allowed the application, Tezcuco was the Athens, and Nezahualcojotl the Solon of Anahuac.

In his last illness, having called all his sons into his presence, he declared Nezahualpilli his heir and successor in the kingdom of Acolhuacan, who, though the youngest of them all, was preferred to the rest, on account of his having been born of the queen Matlalcihuatzin, as well as of his singular rectitude and great talents. He enjoined his first born son Acapipoltzin to assist the new king with his counsel, until he should learn the difficult art of government. He warmly recommended to Nezahualpilli the love of his brothers, the care of his subjects, and a zeal for justice. At last, to prevent any disorder which the news of his death might occasion, he commanded them to conceal it as much as possible from the people until Nezahualpilli should be fixed in quiet possession of the crown. The princes received with tears the last advice of their father, and having left him, and come into the hall of audience where the nobility expected them, Nezahualpilli was proclaimed king of Acolhuacan, Acapipoltzin declaring it to be the last will of their father, who having a long journey to make, chose first to nominate his successor. All paid obedience to the new king, and in the morning after, Nezahualcojotl died, in the forty-fourth year of his reign, and about the eightieth year of his age. His sons concealed his death, and hid his body, burning it secretly, as is probable; and instead of rendering funeral honours to it, they celebrated the coronation of the new king with uncommon festivity and rejoicing. But in spite of their cautious secrecy the news of his death spread suddenly through all the land, and many lords came to the court to condole with the princes. Nevertheless the vulgar remained persuaded that their great king was translated to the company of the gods in reward of his virtues.

Some little time after the exaltation of Nezahualpilli to the throne, the memorable war happened between the Mexicans and their neigh-

SECT. XVI.  
Conquest of  
Tlatelolco,  
and death of  
king Mo-  
quihuix.

(1) In the list which we have given of the historians of that kingdom, it appears many were of the royal family of Tezcuco.

bours and rivals, the Tlatelolcos. Moquihuix king of Tlatelolco, being unable to endure the dazzling glory of the Mexican monarch, used all his arts to darken it. He had married, as we have already mentioned, a sister of king Axayacatl, given him by Montezuma in reward for the famous victory he obtained over the Cotahtese. On this unfortunate queen he frequently vented his malice against his cousin; nor contented with that he clandestinely formed leagues with other states, which like himself bore unwillingly the Mexican yoke. These were Chalco, Xilotepec, Toltitlan, Tenajucan, Mexicaltzinco, Huitzilopochco, Xochimilco, Cuitlahuac, and Mizquic, which agreed to attack the Mexicans in their rear, after the Tlatelolcos should begin battle with them. The Quaupanchese also, the Huexotzincas, and Matlatzincas, whose aid had been requested, were to join their troops with those of Tlatelolco in defence of the city. The queen knew of these negotiations, and either from the hatred she bore to her husband, or from her love to her brother and her native country, she revealed them to Axayacatl, that he might ward off a blow which would have shaken his throne.

Moquihuix being assured of the aid of his confederates assembled the nobles of his court to encourage them to the undertaking. An old and venerable priest raised his voice in the assembly, and in the name of them all declared himself willing to fight to the last against the enemies of his country; then to animate them still more he washed the altar of the sacrifices, and presented the water purple with human blood to the king to drink, and afterwards to all his officers; by which they imagined their courage would be increased, and doubtless it hardened them to the exercise of cruelty upon their foes. In the mean while the queen grew impatient of the ill treatment she suffered, and being alarmed at the dangers of war, forsook her husband and came to Mexico with four sons, to throw herself under the protection of her brother. This it was easy for her to do from the very close neighbourhood of the two cities. An incident of this uncommon nature increased the mutual enmity and disgust of the Mexicans and Tlatelolcos to such a degree, that whenever they met, they abused, fought, and murdered each other.

The time of commencing the war drawing near, Moquihuix with his officers and many of his confederates, made a solemn sacrifice on the mountain which was the nearest to the city, to obtain the protection



BOOK IV. of their gods; and there they fixed the day on which they were to declare war against the Mexicans. A few days after, he sent notice to his allies, to be well prepared to succour him whenever he should begin the attack. Xiloman lord of Colhuacan, was to make the first onset, and afterwards to pretend flight, to induce the Mexicans to pursue him, when the Tlatelolcos were to fall upon their rear. The day after these embassies were sent, Moquihuix performed the ceremony of arming his troops, and then went to the temple of Huitzilopochtli to implore the aid of that god, where the same horrible draft was again taken which Pojahuitl had given them at the first congress, and all the soldiers passed before the idol, with a salutation of profound reverence. This ceremony was hardly finished when a troop of daring Mexicans entered the market-place, killing every one they met; but the troops of the Tlatelolcos coming suddenly up, repulsed them and took some of them prisoners, who were sacrificed without respite, in a temple called Tlillan. That same day, about sun-set, some women of Tlatelolco had the boldness to advance into the streets of Mexico, and to set fire to the birch trees at the doors of the houses, casting, at the same time, impudent reproaches upon the Mexicans, and threatening them with approaching ruin; but they met with the contempt they deserved.

That night the Tlatelolcos armed themselves, and in the morning at break of day they began the attack on Mexico. They were in the heat of the battle when Xiloman arrived with the Colhuas; but perceiving that the king of Tlatelolco had commenced the engagement without waiting for his aid or caring for his counsel, that lord retired in disgust; but desirous of doing some mischief to the Mexicans, he caused several canals to be shut up, to prevent their receiving any assistance by water; these however were soon opened again by order of Axayacatl. The whole of the day the combat lasted with the utmost fury on both sides, until night forced the Tlatelolcos to retire. The Mexicans burnt the houses of the city which were the nearest to Tlatelolco, perhaps on account of their standing too much in the way in the time of engagement; but in setting fire to them, twenty were made prisoners and instantly sacrificed.

Axayacatl that night distributed his army in all the roads which led to Tlatelolco, and at the dawn of day began to march from every quarter  
towards

towards the market-place, which was to be the point where they were to meet. The Tlatelolcos finding themselves attacked on all sides, retreated to the public market-place to collect there all their force, and make the better resistance; but when they reached it, they found themselves still more incommoded and embarrassed by their numbers. The words and cries with which Moquihuix endeavoured, from the top of the great temple, to encourage his troops, were of no avail. The Tlatelolcos were beat down and killed, while those who fell, vented their rage in reproaches against the king: "Descend from thence, you "coward," they said, "and take arms; it is not the part of a brave "man, to stand calmly looking at those who are fighting and falling in "the defence of their country." But these complaints, occasioned by the smarting of their wounds and the agonies of death, were altogether unjust, as Moquihuix neither failed in the duties of a general nor of a king. It was proper for him not to expose his life so much as the soldiers did themselves, as he could be more useful to them by his counsel, and could encourage them by his presence. In the mean time the Mexicans advanced to the steps of the temple, ascended them, and came to the upper balcony where Moquihuix was calling out to his people, and made a desperate defence of himself; but a Mexican captain, named Quetzalhua, with a thrust pushed him backwards down the steps (*m*), when some soldiers took up his body in their arms, and presented it to Axayacatl, who opened his breast, and tore out his heart. An act certainly horrid, but done without the feelings of horror, from its being so frequent at their sacrifices!

Thus fell the brave Moquihuix, and thus was the petty monarchy of the Tlatelolcos, which had been governed by four kings in the space of about one hundred and eighteen years, dissolved. The Tlatelolcos, after the death of their king, soon fell into disorder, and attempted to save themselves by flight, by passing across their enemies; but four hundred and sixty remained dead on the market-place, among whom were some officers of distinction. After this defeat the city of Tlatelolco was united with the city of Mexico, and was no longer considered as a distinct

(*m*) The interpreter of Mendoza's collection says, that after the loss of the battle, Moquihuix fled to the top of the temple, and threw himself head-long from it, being unable to endure the reproaches of one of the priests; but the account of other historians appears to us more consistent with the character of this king.



## BOOK IV.

city, but as a part, or rather as the suburbs of Mexico, which it is at present. The king of Mexico constantly maintained a governor there, and the Tlatelolcos, besides the tribute which they annually paid of maize, robes, arms, and armour, were obliged to repair the temple of Huitznahuac as often as it became necessary.

We are ignorant whether the Quauhpanchese, the Huexotzincas, and the Matlatzincas, who were the confederates of the Tlatelolcos, did actually assist in this war. Of their other allies, historians say, that having come to the succour of the Tlatelolcos, after the king Moquihuix was killed and the conflict over, they returned without action. The moment that Axayacatl found himself victorious, he condemned Pojahuitl, and Ehecatzitzimitl, both of them Tlatelolcos, to the last punishment, for having been the persons who most keenly excited the citizens against the Mexicans, and also put the lords of Xochimilco, Cuitlahuac, Colhuacan, Huitzilopochco and others, to death, for entering into a confederacy with his enemies.

SECT. XVII.  
New conquests and  
death of  
Axayacatl.

To take revenge of the Matlatzincas, a numerous and powerful nation, established in the valley of Toluca, and still unsubjected to the Mexicans, Axayacatl declared war against them, and marching with the two allied kings he took in his passage, Atlapolco, and Xalatlahuico; and afterwards he conquered in the same valley, Toluca, Tetenanco, Metepec, Tzinacantepec, Calimaja, and other places in the south division of the valley, which continued, from that time forward, tributary to the crown of Mexico. Some time after, he returned into the same province, to subdue, likewise, the north part of the valley, at present called *Valle d'Ixtlahuacan*, and in particular Xiquipilco, a considerable city and state of the Otomies, whose lord, called Tlilcuezpalin was famous for his bravery. Axayacatl, who likewise boasted of his courage, was anxious to engage him in single combat during the battle, which took place; but the event proved disastrous to Axayacatl himself; he received a violent wound on the thigh, and two captains of the Otomies advancing, brought him, with a few strokes more, to the ground, and would have made him prisoner, if some young Mexicans had not, when they saw their king in such danger, resolutely defended his liberty and his life. Notwithstanding this misfortune and disgrace, the Mexicans obtained a complete victory, and, according to what historians say, made eleven thousand and sixty prisoners, among whom were Tlilcuezpalin and the two captains who had

had attacked the king. By this glorious victory Axayacatl added Xiquipilco, Xocotitlan, Atlacomalco, and all the other places comprehended in the valley which were not before subdued, to the crown of Mexico.

As soon as Axayacatl had recovered of his wound, which made him halt in one leg during the rest of his life, he gave a great entertainment to the allied kings, at which he put Tlilcuezpalin and the two other captains to death. The execution of such a punishment did not appear to those people unseasonable, amidst the festivity of an entertainment; from being used to shed human blood, the horror naturally arising from it, changed into recreation. So strong is the force of custom, and so easy is it to familiarize our minds to the most horrible objects.

In the last years of his reign, the bounds of his empire appearing rather too confined towards the west, he again took the field; and passing through the valley of Toluca, and crossing the mountains, he conquered Tochpan and Tlaximalojan, which was afterwards the frontier of the kingdom of Michuacan. From thence returning towards the east he made himself master of Ocuilla and Malacatepec. The progress of his conquests and victories were now interrupted by his death, which happened in the thirteenth year of his reign, or the 1477 of the vulgar era. He had a genius for war, and was rigorous in punishing the transgressors of the laws which his predecessor had established. He left a numerous offspring by his different wives, among which was the celebrated Montezuma of whom we shall shortly have occasion to speak.

In the room of Axayacatl, Tizoc was elected, who was his elder brother and had served in the post of general of the army (*n*). We do not find where he made his first expedition to procure the victims necessary at the ceremony of his coronation. His reign was short and obscure. In the tenth painting, however, of Mendoza's collection there is a representation of fourteen cities subdued by him, among which are Toluca and Tecaxic, which having rebelled against the crown, occasioned the necessity of re-conquering them; also Chillan, Jancuitlan, in the coun-

SECT. XVIII  
Tizoc, seventh king.  
of Mexico.

(*n*) Acosta makes Tizoc son of Montezuma I. and the interpreter of Mendoza's collection, makes him son of Axayacatl; but both are demonstrated to be wrong, by other historians. Acosta was wrong also in the order of the kings, as he placed Tizoc's reign before Axayacatl. See our Dissertations on this head.



## BOOK III.

SECT. XIX.  
War between  
the Tezcucans and the  
Huexotzincas.

try of the Mixtecas, Mazatlan, Tlapan, and Tamapachco. Torquemada makes mention of a victory which he obtained over Tlacotepec.

It was in the time of this king, that the war between the Tezcucan nation and the Huexotzincas happened. This war took its rise from the ambition of the princes the brothers of king Nezahualpilli. Although they shewed no discontent, in the beginning, at the exaltation of their younger brother, yet as the memory of their late father began to die away, they felt themselves unable to endure the controul of one whom, in point of age, they had a right to command; and formed a secret conspiracy against him. To help them in their wicked designs they applied first to the Chalchese, who were always the fittest and readiest for such undertakings; but failing in all the means employed by them, they made solicitations to the Huexotzincas for the same purpose. Nezahualpilli being apprised of their conspiracy, raised speedily a strong army, and marched against the Huexotzincas. The general of that state had procured intelligence of the marks of Nezahualpilli's person, that he might direct all his blows against him, and had promised rewards to any person who should produce the king to him alive, or dead. There were not wanting others, who intimated all this to the king; upon which, before he entered into battle he changed garments with one of his captains. This unfortunate officer, being taken for the king, was quickly set upon by the multitude, and killed. As the enemy were giving to vent their fury on him, Nezahualpilli made his attack on the Huexotzinco general, and killed him, though not without the greatest risk of being cut to pieces by the soldiers who flew to the defence of their general. The Tezcucan people, who fell into the same mistake with those of Huexotzinco, by not knowing the exchange of dress which had been made, began to be dispirited; but suddenly again recognizing the king, they ran up eagerly to rescue him; and after defeating the enemy, they sacked the city of Huexotzinco, and returned triumphant with spoils to Tezcucó. Historians are silent respecting the fate of the princes who were the authors of this conspiracy. It is probable they were either slain in the battle, or escaped by flight from the chastisement they deserved. Nezahualpilli, who, a little before had built himself a new palace, desirous of leaving a perpetual monument of this victory, ordered likewise the construction of a wall, which should

inclose exactly so much space of ground as was occupied by the Huexotzincas when they came up to the defence of their general, and gave the place the name of that day on which he had obtained the victory. Thus did those, who are thought by many to have no views of futurity, seek to immortalize their name and the glory of their actions.

The king of Tezcuco had already several wives, who were descended of noble houses; but he had not declared any of them his queen, having reserved that honour for one whom he was to take of the royal family of Mexico. He demanded her of king Tizoc, who gave him one of his grand-daughters, and daughter of *Tzotzocatzin*. The nuptials were solemnized in Tezcuco, a great concourse of the nobility of both courts being present. This lady had a sister possessed of singular beauty, who was named *Xocotzin*. They loved each other so much, that not being able to endure a separation, the new queen obtained permission from her father, to take her sister along with her to Tezcuco. By frequently viewing and conversing with his beautiful cousin, the king became so enamoured, that he resolved to wed her also, and raise her to the dignity of queen. These second nuptials, according to the account given by historians, were the most solemn and magnificent which were ever celebrated in that country. A short time after, the king had by his first queen, a son named *Cacamatzin*, who succeeded him in the crown, and being afterwards made prisoner by the Spaniards, died unhappily. By the second he had *Huexotzincatzin* (o), of whom we shall speak presently, *Coanacotzin*, who was also king of Acolhuacan, and, some time after the conquest by the Spaniards, ordered to be hanged by the conqueror Cortes, and *Ixtlilxochitl*, who became a confederate of the Spaniards against the Mexicans, and was converted to christianity, and baptized by the name and surname of that conqueror.

SECT. XX.  
Marriage of  
king Neza-  
hualpilli with  
two noble la-  
dies of Mexi-  
co.

Whilst Nezahualpilli continued to multiply his descendants, enjoying great peace and tranquillity in his kingdom, the death of the king of Mexico was plotted by some of his feudatory subjects. Techotlalla, lord of Iztapalapan, either in resentment of some affront he had received, or grown impatient of subordination to Tizoc, conceived the guilty purpose of attempting the king's life, but discovered it to those only whom

SECT. XXI.  
Tragic death  
of king  
Tizoc.

(o) The name *Huexotzincatl* given to that prince, was certainly on account of his victory over the *Huexotzincas*.



BOOK IV. he thought capable of putting it in execution. He and Maxtlaton, lord of Tlachco, agreed upon the manner in which they were to accomplish the dangerous deed. Historians are not of one opinion on this head. Some of them relate that they employed forcereffes, who, by means of their arts, took his life from him; but this is evidently a popular fable. Others affirm that they administered poison to him. Which ever was his mode of death, it is certain that their machinations were successful. Tizoc died in the fifth year of his reign, the 1482d of the vulgar era. He was a person of a circumspect, serious, character; and rigorous, like his predecessors and successors, in punishing delinquents. During his time the power and wealth of the crown had arrived to such a height, that he undertook to construct a temple to the tutelary god of the nation, which was to have surpassed in grandeur and magnificence, all the temples of that country; he had prepared a vast quantity of materials for that purpose, and had begun the structure when death interrupted his projects.

SECT. XXII.  
Ahuitzotl,  
eighth king  
of Mexico.

The Mexicans, well knowing their king had not fallen by any natural death, sought revenge before they proceeded to a new election. They were so diligent in their inquiries and search, that they soon detected the perpetrators of the act, and executed sentence upon them in the greater public place of the city of Mexico, in presence of the two allied kings, and of all the Tezcucan and Mexican nobility. The electors being assembled to appoint a new king, they chose Ahuitzotl, the brother of their two preceding kings, who was already general of the army; for, from the time of Chimalpopoca the custom had prevailed of exalting no one to the throne who had not first occupied that post, it being judged highly requisite that he who was to become the chief of so warlike a nation, should first give proofs of his bravery, and that while he commanded the army, he might learn the art of governing the kingdom.

SECT.  
XXIII.  
Dedication  
of the greater  
temple of  
Mexico.

The first object to which the new king paid attention, was the finishing of that magnificent temple, which had been designed and begun by his predecessor. It was resumed with the utmost spirit and activity, an incredible number of workmen being assembled, and was completed in four years. While the building was constructing, the king went frequently to war, and all the prisoners which were taken from  
the

the enemy, were reserved for the festival of its consecration. The wars BOOK IV.  
of these four years were carried on against the Mazahuas, a few miles  
distant towards of the west, who had rebelled against the crown of Tacu-  
ba; against the Zapotecas, three hundred miles distant in the south-east;  
and against several other nations. When the fabric was completed, the  
king invited the two allied kings, and all the nobility of both kingdoms,  
to its dedication. The concourse of people was by far the most nume-  
rous ever seen in Mexico (*q*); as this famous solemnity drew spectators  
from the most distant places. The festival lasted four days, during which  
they sacrificed, in the upper porch of the temple, all the prisoners  
which they had made in the four preceding years. Historians are not  
agreed concerning the number of the victims. Torquemada says, that  
they amounted to seventy-two thousand three hundred and forty-four.  
Others affirm they were sixty-four thousand and sixty in number. To  
make these horrible sacrifices with more show and parade, they rang-  
ed the prisoners in two files, each a mile and a half in length, which  
began in the roads of Tacuba and Iztpalapan, and terminated at the  
temple (*r*), where, as soon as the victims arrived, they were sacrificed.  
After the festival the king made presents to all whom he had invited,  
which must certainly have been attended with an enormous expence.  
This event happened in 1486.

In that same year, Mozauiqui lord of Xalatlaicho, in imitation of  
his king to whom he bore much affection, dedicated another temple,  
which had been built a little before, and sacrificed likewise a great num-  
ber of prisoners. So much slaughter and blood did the cruel and bar-  
barous superstition of these nations occasion.

The year 1487 was no way memorable, except on account of a vio-  
lent earthquake, and the death of Chimalpopoca king of Tacuba, who  
was succeeded by Totoquihuatzin the Second.

(*q*) Some authors affirm, that the number of persons at this festival amounted to six millions. Although it appears exaggerated, yet it does not seem altogether improbable, considering the populousness of that country, the grandeur and novelty of the festival, and the ease with which those people moved from place to place, being accustomed to travel on foot without the hindrance of baggage or equipage.

(*r*) Betancourt says that the file of prisoners ranged on the road of Iztpalapan, began at the place which is now called *La Candelaria Malcuitlapilco*, and was given this name on that account, as the word Malcuitlapilco signifies the tail, point, or the extremity of the prisoners. This conjecture is pretty probable; neither is it easy to trace a better origin of the name.



## BOOK IV.

SECT.  
XXIV.  
Conquests of  
king Ahuit-  
zotl.

Ahuitzotl, whose warlike genius did not permit him to enjoy peace, went again to war against Cozcaquauhtenanco, and obtained a complete victory; but having met with an obstinate resistance, he treated them with great severity. Afterwards he subdued Quapilollan, and passed from thence to make war on Quetzalcuitlapillan, a large province peopled with a warlike nation (*s*); and lastly turned his arms against *Quauhtla*, a place situate on the coast of the gulf of Mexico, in which war Montezuma, the son of Axayacatl, and the successor of Ahuitzotl in the kingdom distinguished himself. A little time after, the Mexicans together with the Tezcucans, went against the Huexotzincas, in which war Tezcatzin, the brother of the above mentioned Montezuma, and Tliltototl, a noble Mexican officer, who afterwards became general of the army, gained great renown. We do not find in historians either the cause or particulars of this war. The expedition against the Huexotzincas being concluded, Ahuitzotl celebrated the dedication of a new temple called *Tlacatecco*, at which the prisoners made in the preceeding wars were sacrificed; but the rejoicings of this festival were disturbed by the burning of the temple of *Tlillan*.

Thus this king continued in constant wars until 1496, in which the war of Atlixco happened. The entry of the Mexican army into this valley was so unexpected, that the first intimation which the Atlixchese nation had of it was the sight of them when they entered. They took up arms immediately in their defence; but finding they had not forces sufficient to resist any length of time, they applied to the Huexotzincas, their neighbours, for assistance. When the Atlixchese ambassadors arrived at Huexotzinco, they found a famous captain named *Toltecatl* playing at football, whose great courage was still less remarkable than the extraordinary strength of his arm. As soon as he was informed concerning the Mexican army, he quitted play to repair with auxiliary troops to Atlixco, and entering into the battle unarmed to shew his bravery, and the contempt he entertained of his enemies, he knocked down the first Mexican he met with his fist, and took his arms from him, with which he began to make great slaughter. The Mexicans being

(s) Torquemada says, that Ahuitzotl having frequently attempted the conquest of Quetzalcuitlapillan, did never yet succeed; but among the conquests of this king in the eleventh painting of Mendoza's Collection, this province is represented.

unable to overcome the resistance of their enemies, abandoned the field and returned to Mexico covered with ignominy. The Huexotzincas, in reward of the singular bravery of Toltecatl, made him the chief of their republic. This state however was afterwards subjected to the dominion of the Mexicans whom they again provoked by fresh insults; but as the conquered nations only bore the yoke while they could not shake it off, whenever the Huexotzincas found themselves able to resist, they rebelled; and the greater part of the provinces subdued by the Mexican arms did the same, which forced the Mexican army to keep in continual motion, to regain what their king occasionally lost in this way. Toltecatl accepted the dignity and post conferred upon him; but a year had hardly elapsed when he was constrained to abandon not only his charge but his country. The priests and other ministers of the temples making an abuse of their authority, entered into private houses and took away the maize and turkeys which they found in them, and committed other excesses unbecoming their dignity. Toltecatl endeavoured to put a stop to such injustice; but the priests rose in arms. The populace supported them; another party opposed their violence, and a war kindled between the two factions, which, like all other civil wars, brought on the greatest evils. Toltecatl weary of governing a people so untractable, or afraid of perishing in the storm, removed from the city with some other nobles, and passing the mountains arrived at Tlamanalco. The governor of that city gave speedy advice of them to the king of Mexico, who instantly put all the fugitives to death in punishment of their rebellion, and sent their dead bodies to Huexotzinco to intimidate the rebels.

In the year 1498, it appearing to the king of Mexico, that the navigation of the lake was become difficult from the scarcity of water, he was desirous of increasing it from the fountain of Huitzilopochco which supplied the Cojoacanese, and called on Tzotzomatzin, lord of Cojoacan, to give his orders for that purpose. Tzotzomatzin represented to him that that spring was not constant; that sometimes it was dry, and at other times ran in such abundance, that it might cause some disaster to his court. Ahuitzotl imagining that these reasons were mere pretences to be excused from doing what he was commanded, repeated his first order, but hearing the difficulty first mentioned insisted on, dismissed

SECT. XXV.  
New inundation of Mexico.



## BOOK IV.

him in anger, and made him be put to death. Such is too often the recompence of good counsel when princes are obstinate in their caprices, and neglect to attend to the sincere remonstrances of their faithful subjects. Ahuitzotl being unwilling on any account to abandon his projects, caused a large and spacious aqueduct to be formed (*t*) from Cojoacan to Mexico, by which the water was conveyed with many superstitious ceremonies; some of the priests offering incense, others sacrificing quails, and anointing the lip or border of the aqueduct with the blood; others founding musical instruments, and otherwise solemnizing the arrival of the water. The high-priest wore the same habit with which they represented *Chalchibuitlicue*, goddess of the water (*u*).

With such congratulations the water was received at Mexico; but the prevailing joy was not long of being changed into lamentations: as the rains of that year were so plentiful, the waters of the lake rose and overflowed the city; the streets were filled with sailing vessels, and some houses washed away. The king happening to be one day in the lower chambers of his palace, the water entered suddenly in such abundance, that as he hastened to get out at the door, which was low, he received a violent contusion on his head, which some time after occasioned his death. Distressed equally with the accident of the inundation, and the clamours of his people, he called the king of Acolhuacan to his assistance, who, without delay, ordered the dyke to be repaired, which had been built by the advice of his father in the reign of Montezuma.

The Mexicans were scarcely delivered from the calamity of the inundation, when a year after, the superabundance of water having rotted all their maize, they were afflicted with a scarcity of corn; but in this year they had the fortune to discover a quarry of *tetzontli* in the vale of Mexico, which proved so useful for the buildings of that city. The king immediately made use of this kind of stone for temples; and after his example, private individuals built their houses of it. He or-

(*t*) This aqueduct was entirely destroyed by Ahuitzotl himself, or his successor, for on the arrival of the Spaniards nothing remained of it.

(*u*) Acosta testifies that the conveyance of the water of Huitzilopochco to Mexico, and the ceremonies performed by the priests were represented in a Mexican painting, which in his time was, and may be still, in the library of the Vatican.

dered all ruinous edifices to be pulled down and rebuilt in a better form ; adding much to the beauty and magnificence of his court.

He passed the last years of his life in constant wars, namely, those of Izquixochitlan, Amatlan, Tlacuilollan, Xaltepec, Tecuantepec, and Huexotla in Huasteca. Tliltototl, the Mexican general, having finished the war of Izquixochitlan, carried his victorious arms as far as Quahtemallan, or Guatemala, more than nine hundred miles to the south-east from the court, in which campaigns, according to the historians, he performed prodigies of valour, but none of them relate the particular actions of this renowned general ; nor do we know whether that great tract of country remained subject to the crown of Mexico.

At length in the year 1502, after a reign of about twenty years, Ahuizotl died of an illness occasioned by the abovementioned contusion on his head. He was a very warlike king, and one of those who extended most considerably the dominions of the crown. At the time of his death, the Mexicans were in possession of all which they had at the arrival of the Spaniards. Besides courage, he had two other royal virtues, which made him celebrated among his countrymen ; these were magnificence and liberality. He embellished Mexico with so many new and magnificent buildings, that it was already become the first city of the new world. When he received the provincial tributes he assembled the people in a certain square of the city, and personally distributed provisions and cloathing to the necessitous. He rewarded his captains and soldiers who distinguished themselves in war, and the ministers and officers of the crown who served him with fidelity, with gold, silver, jewels, and precious feathers. These virtues were put to the foil by some vices, as he was capricious, vindictive, and sometimes cruel, and so inclined to war, that he appeared to hate peace ; from which the name Ahuizotl was used proverbially by the Spaniards of that kingdom to signify a man whose troublesome vexatious temper would not permit another to live (x). But he was in other respects good humoured, and delighted so much in music, that he never wanted, neither by night nor day this amusement in his palace ; but it must have been prejudicial to the public good, as it robbed him of a great part of that time which should

BOOK IV.

SECT.  
XXVI.  
New conquests and  
death of Ahuizotl.

(x) The Spaniards say, N. ès mio Ahuizote ; Questi ès l'Ahuizote di N. a niuno manca il suo Ahuizote, &c.

have



**BOOK IV.** have been dedicated to the important concerns of his kingdom. He was not less attached to the company of women. His predecessors had many wives, from an opinion that their authority and grandeur would be heightened in proportion to the number of persons who contributed to their pleasures. Ahuitzotl having so much extended his dominions, and encreased the power of the crown, was desirous also of shewing the superiority of his grandeur over that of his ancestors, in the excessive number of his wives. In this state was the court of Mexico at the beginning of the sixteenth century ; of that century so fruitful in great events, during which that kingdom was to put on a quite different aspect, and the whole order and system of the new world was to be reversed.







*Motezuma Xocojotzin.*

## B O O K V.

*Events under Montezuma II. the ninth King of Mexico, until the Year 1519. Particulars of his Life, his Government, and the Magnificence of his Palaces, Gardens, and Woods. The War of Tlascala, and some Account of Tlahuicole, a Tlascalan Captain. Death and Eulogium of Nezahualpilli, King of Acolhuacan, and new Revolutions in that Kingdom. Presages of the Arrival of the Spaniards.*

A Huitzotl being dead, and his funeral celebrated with extraordinary magnificence, they proceeded to the election of a new sovereign. No brother of the preceding kings survived; on which account, according to the law of the kingdom, one of the grandsons of the last king, who were sons of his predecessors, had the right of succession; of these there were many; for of the sons of Axayacatl, Montezuma, Cuitlahuac, Matlatzincatl, Pinahuitzin, Cecepatzincatl, were still living, and of those of king Tizoc, Imactlacuijatzin, Tepehuatzin, and others, whose names we do not know. Montezuma, who was called by the name of *Xocojotzin*, to distinguish him from the other king of that name, was elected in preference to all the others (*a*).

(*z*) Besides the bravery which he had displayed in several battles, in which he held the post of general, he was likewise a priest, and much revered for his gravity, his circumspection, and religion. He was a man of a taciturn temper, extremely deliberate, not only in words, but also in his actions; and whenever he spoke in the royal council, of which he was a member, he was listened to with respect.

(*a*) The author of the Annotations to Cortes's Letters, printed in Mexico in the year 1770 says, that Montezuma II. was son of Montezuma I. This is a gross mistake, as we know from all the historians, both Mexican and Spanish, that he was the son of Axayacatl. See Torquemada, Bernal Diaz, the interpreter of Mendoza's Collection, &c.

The first Montezuma was called by the Mexicans *Huehue Motuzoma*, and the second *Motenczoma Xocojotzin*, names which are equivalent to the *senior* and *junior* of the Latins.

BOOK V.

SECT. I.  
Montezuma,  
the ninth  
king of Mex-  
ico.

Notice



## BOOK V.

Notice of the election being sent to the two allied kings, they repaired instantly to the court to pay their compliments. Montezuma, being apprized of it, also retired to the temple, appearing to think himself unworthy of so much honour. The nobility went there to acquaint him with his being elected, and found him sweeping the pavement of the temple. He was conducted by a numerous attendance to the palace, where the electors, with due solemnity, intimated the election had fallen on him as the fittest person to fill the throne of Mexico. From thence he returned to the temple to perform the usual ceremonies, and as soon as they were finished he received on the throne the homage of the nobility, and heard the congratulatory harangues of the orators. The first speech was made by Nezahualpilli, king of Acolhuacan, which we present to our readers such as it is preserved to us by the Mexicans.

“ The great good fortune,” he said, “ of the Mexican monarchy is  
 “ made manifest from the unanimity in your election, and the uncommon  
 “ applause with which it is celebrated by all. All have in truth rea-  
 “ son to celebrate it, for the kingdom of Mexico is arrived at such  
 “ greatness, no less fortitude than your invincible heart possesses, no  
 “ less wisdom than that which in you we admire, would be suffi-  
 “ cient to support so great a load. It is most evident, how strong  
 “ the love is which the omnipotent God bears to this nation; as  
 “ he has enlightened it, that it may discern and chuse that which can  
 “ be most beneficial to it. Who is able to persuade himself that he,  
 “ who, as a private individual, has searched into the mysteries of hea-  
 “ ven (a), will not now, when king, know the things of this earth,  
 “ which will preserve the happiness of his subjects? That he who on so  
 “ many occasions has displayed the greatness of his soul, will not now re-  
 “ tain it when it is become most necessary to him? Who can believe,  
 “ that where there is so much courage, and so much wisdom, the widow  
 “ or the orphan will ever apply without relief? The Mexican empire  
 “ has unquestionably attained the height of its power, as the Creator of  
 “ heaven has invested you with so much authority as to inspire all those  
 “ who behold you with awe and respect. Rejoice, therefore, O happy

(a) This saying of Nezahualpilli appears to imply that Montezuma was engaged in the study of astronomy.

“ land,

“ land, that you are destined to have a prince who will not only be thy  
 “ support, but will by his clemency prove a father and brother to his sub-  
 “ jects. Thou hast, indeed, a king who will not seize the occasion of his  
 “ exaltation to give himself up to luxury, and lie sluggishly in bed, aban-  
 “ doned to pastimes and effeminate pleasures; his anxiety for thee rather  
 “ will wake and agitate his bosom in the softest hour of repose, nor  
 “ will he be able to taste food, or relish the most delicious morsel, while  
 “ thy interests are oppressed or neglected. And do you, noble prince and  
 “ most powerful lord, be confident, and trust that the Creator of hea-  
 “ ven, who has raised you to so high a dignity, will give you strength  
 “ to discharge all the obligations which are annexed to it. He who  
 “ has hitherto been so liberal to you, will not now be niggardly of his  
 “ precious gifts, having himself raised you to the throne on which I  
 “ wish you many years of happiness.”

Montezuma heard this harangue with much attention, and was so greatly affected by it, that he attempted three times to answer it, but could not, from the interruption of the tears, which the secret pleasure he felt produced, and gave him the appearance of much humility; but, at last after checking his emotions, he replied in few words, declaring himself unworthy of the station to which he was exalted, and returning thanks to that king for the praises which he bestowed on him; and after hearing the other addresses on this occasion, he returned to the temple to keep fast for four days, at the end of which he was re-conducted with great state to the royal palace.

He thought now of going to war to procure victims to be sacrificed at his coronation. This disaster fell upon the Atlixchese, who some time before had rebelled against the crown. The king, accordingly, set out from the court, with the flower of the nobility, his brothers and cousins being amongst the number. In this war the Mexicans lost some brave officers; but, notwithstanding, they reduced the rebels under their former yoke, and Montezuma returned victorious, bringing along with him the prisoners which he required at his coronation. On this occasion was displayed so much pomp of games, dances, theatrical representations and illuminations, and with such variety and richness of tributes sent from the different provinces of the kingdom, that foreigners never known before in Mexico, came to see



## BOOK V.

it, and even the enemies of the Mexicans, namely, the Tlascalans and Michuacanese were present in disguise at the spectacle ; but Montezuma having intelligence of this, with a generosity becoming a king, ordered them to be properly lodged and entertained, and caused several scaffolds to be erected where they might with ease and convenience view the whole of the solemnity.

SECT. II.  
Department  
and ceremonies  
of king  
Montezuma.

The first act of this king was to reward a renowned captain, named *Tlilxochitl*, with the state of Tlachaucho, for the great services he had rendered his ancestors during several wars : a truly happy commencement of a reign, had his succeeding conduct been correspondent to it. But he had scarce begun to exercise his authority when he discovered the pride which had hitherto lain concealed under an exterior of seeming humility. All his predecessors had been accustomed to confer offices on persons of merit, and those who appeared the most able to discharge them, honouring, without partiality, the nobility or those of the class of plebeians occasionally, notwithstanding the solemn agreement entered into by the nobility and plebeians in the reign of Itzcoatl. Montezuma as soon as he seized the reins of government shewed quite different sentiments, and disapproved of the conduct of his predecessors, under pretence that the plebeians should be employed according to their rank, for that in all their actions the baseness of their birth, and the meanness of their education were apparent. Being biased by this maxim, he stripped the plebeians of those offices which they held either in his royal mansion, or about the court, and declared them incapable of holding any such in future. A prudent old man, who had been his tutor, represented to him that this resolution would alienate the minds of the people from him ; but no remonstrances were sufficient to divert him from his purpose.

All the servants of his palace consisted of persons of rank. Besides those who constantly lived in it, every morning six hundred feudatory lords and nobles came to pay court to him. They passed the whole day in the anti-chamber, where none of their servants were permitted to enter, conversing in a low voice, and waiting the orders of their sovereign. The servants who accompanied those lords, were so numerous as to occupy three small courts of the palace, and many waited in the streets. The women about the court were not less in number, including those of rank,  
servants,

servants, and slaves. All this numerous female tribe, lived shut up in a kind of seraglio, under the care of some noble matrons, who watched over their conduct; as these kings were extremely jealous, and every piece of misconduct which happened in the palace, however slight, was severely punished. Of these women the king retained those who pleased him (*d*); the others he gave away, as a recompence for the services of his vassals. All the feudatories of the crown were obliged to reside for some months of the year, at the court; and at their return to their states, to leave their sons or brothers behind them, as hostages, which the king demanded as a security for their fidelity; on which account they required to keep houses in Mexico.

The forms and ceremonials introduced at court, were another effect of the despotism of Montezuma. No one could enter the palace, either to serve the king, or to confer with him on any business, without pulling off his shoes and stockings at the gate. No person was allowed to appear before the king in any pompous dress, as it was deemed a want of respect to majesty; consequently the greatest lords, excepting the nearest relations of the king, stripped themselves of the rich dress which they wore, or at least covered it with one more ordinary, to shew their humility before him. All persons on entering the hall of audience, and before speaking to the king, made three bows, saying at the first, lord; at the second, my lord; and at the third, great lord (*e*). They spoke low, and with the head inclined, and received the answer which the king gave them by means of his secretaries, as attentively and humbly as if it had been the voice of an oracle. In taking leave, no person ever turned his back upon the throne.

The audience hall served also for his dining room. The table was a large pillow, and his seat a low chair. The table cloth, napkins, and towels were of cotton, but very fine, white, and always perfectly clean. The kitchen utensils were of the earthen ware of Cholula; but none of these things ever served him more than once, as immediately after he gave them to one of his nobles. The cups in which they prepared his

(*d*) Some historians affirm that Montezuma had a hundred and fifty of his wives pregnant at once; but it is certainly not very credible.

(*e*) The Mexican words are, *Tlatoani*, lord; *Notlatocatxin*, my lord; and *Huitlatoani*, great lord.



## BOOK V.

chocolate, and other drinks of the cocoa, were of gold, or some beautiful sea-shell, or naturally formed vessels curiously varnished, of which we shall speak hereafter. He had gold plate, but it was used only on certain festivals, in the temple. The number, and variety of dishes at his table amazed the Spaniards who saw them. The conqueror Cortez, says, that they covered the floor of a great hall, and that there were dishes of every kind of game, fish, fruit, and herbs of that country. Three or four hundred noble youths carried this dinner in form; presented it as soon as the king sat down to table, and immediately retired; and that it might not grow cold, every dish was accompanied with its chafing-dish. The king marked with a rod, which he had in his hand, the meats which he chose, and the rest were distributed among the nobles who were in the anti-chamber. Before he sat down, four of the most beautiful women of his seraglio, presented water to him to wash his hands, and continued standing all the time of his dinner, together with six of his principal ministers, and his carver.

As soon as the king sat down to table, the carver shut the door of the hall, that none of the other nobles might see him eat. The ministers stood at a distance, and kept a profound silence, unless when they made answer to what the king said. The carver and the four women served the dishes to him, besides two others who brought him bread made of maize baked with eggs. He frequently heard music, during the time of his meal, and was entertained with the humorous sayings of some deformed men whom he kept out of mere state. He shewed much satisfaction in hearing them, and observed that amongst their jests, they frequently pronounced some important truth. When his dinner was over he took tobacco mixed with liquid amber, in a pipe, or reed beautifully varnished, and with the smoke of it put himself to sleep.

After having slept a little, upon the same low chair he gave audience, and listened attentively to all that was communicated to him; encouraged those who, from embarrassment, were unable to speak to him, and answered every one by his ministers or secretaries. After giving audience, he was entertained with music, being much delighted with hearing the glorious actions of his ancestors sung. At other times he amused himself with seeing various games played, of which we shall speak hereafter. When he went abroad, he was carried on the  
shoulders

shoulders of the nobles in a litter covered with a rich canopy, attended by a numerous retinue of courtiers; and wherever he passed, every person stopped with their eyes shut, as if they feared to be dazzled with the splendor of majesty. When he alighted from the litter to walk on foot, they spread carpets, that he might not touch the earth with his feet.

The grandeur and magnificence of his palaces, houses of pleasure, woods, and gardens, were correspondent to this majesty. The palace of his usual residence was a vast edifice of stone and lime, which had twenty doors to the public square and streets; three great courts, in one of which was a beautiful fountain, several halls, and more than a hundred chambers. Some of the apartments had walls of marble and other valuable kinds of stone. The beams were of cedar, cypress, and other excellent woods, well finished and carved. Among the halls there was one so large, that, according to the testimony of an eye-witness of veracity (*f*), it could contain three thousand people. Besides this palace, he had others, both within and without the capital. In Mexico, besides the seraglio for his wives, there was lodging for all his ministers and counsellors, and all the officers of his household and court; and also accommodation for foreign lords who arrived there, and particularly for the two allied kings.

SECT III.  
Magnificence  
of the palaces  
and royal  
houses.

Two houses in Mexico he appropriated to animals; the one for birds, which did not live by prey; the other for those of prey, quadrupeds, and reptiles. There were several chambers belonging to the first, and galleries supported on pillars of marble, all of one piece. These galleries looked towards a garden, where, in the midst of some shrubbery, ten fish-ponds were formed, some of them of fresh water for the aquatic birds of rivers, and others of salt-water for those of the sea. In other parts of the house were all sorts of birds, in such number and variety, as to strike the Spaniards with wonder, who could not believe there was any species in the world wanting to the collection. They were supplied with the same food which they fed upon while they enjoyed their liberty, whether seeds, fruits, or insects. For those birds

(*f*) The anonymous conqueror, in his valuable relation or narrative. He says also, that he went four different times into that great palace, and ranged over it till he was fatigued, but could not see it all.

which



## BOOK V.

who lived on fish only, the daily consumption was ten Castilian *pesos* of fish, (according to the testimony of the conqueror Cortez, in his letters to Charles V.) which is more than three hundred Roman pounds. Three hundred men, says Cortez, were employed to take care of those birds, besides their physicians, who observed their distempers, and applied timely remedies to them. Of those three hundred men, some procured them their food, others distributed it, others took care of their eggs at the time of their incubation, and others picked their plumage at certain seasons of the year; for, besides the pleasure which the king took in seeing so great a multitude of animals collected together, he was principally careful of their feathers, not less for the sake of the famous Mosaic images, of which we shall speak hereafter, than of the other works which were made of them. The halls and chambers of those houses, were so many in number, as the conqueror above mentioned attests, that they could have accommodated two great princes with all their retinue. This celebrated house was situated in the place where, at present, the great convent of St. Francis stands.

The other house appropriated to the wild animals, had a large and handsome court, with a chequered pavement, and was divided into various apartments. One of them contained all the birds of prey, from the royal eagle to the kestrel, and many individuals of every species. These birds were distributed, according to their species, in various subterraneous chambers, which were more than seven feet deep, and upwards of seventeen in length and breadth. The half of every chamber was covered with flat stones: and stakes were fixed in the wall, on which they might sleep, and be defended from rain. The other half of the chamber was only covered with a lattice, through which they enjoyed the light of the sun. For the support of these birds, were killed, daily, near five hundred turkeys. In the same house were many low halls filled with a great number of strong wooden cages, in which, lions, tygers, wolves, coyotoo, and wild cats were confined, and all other kinds of wild beasts, which were fed upon deer, rabbits, hares, techichis, and other animals, and the intestines of human sacrifices.

The king of Mexico not only kept all the species of animals, which other princes do for state, but likewise such as by nature seemed exempted

empted from slavery, namely, crocodiles, and serpents. The serpents were kept in large casks or vessels; the crocodiles in ponds, which were walled round. There were also, various ponds for fish, two of which, that are remaining and still beautiful, we have seen in the palace of Chapoltepec, two miles from Mexico.

Montezuma, who was not satisfied with having every sort of animal in his palace, also collected there all irregularly formed men, who either from the colour of their hair, or of their skin, or some other deformity in their persons, were oddities of their species. A humour this, however, not unattended with beneficial consequences, as it gave maintenance to a number of miserable objects, and delivered them from the inhuman insults of their other fellow-creatures.

All his palaces were surrounded with beautiful gardens, where there was every kind of beautiful flower, odoriferous herb, and medicinal plant. He had, likewise, woods inclosed with walls, and furnished with variety of game, in which he frequently sported. One of those woods was upon an island in the lake, known at present, among the Spaniards, by the name of *Pinon*.

Of all these palaces, gardens, and woods, there is now remaining the wood of Chapoltepec only, which the Spanish viceroys have preserved for their pleasure. All the others were destroyed by the conquerors. They laid in ruins the most magnificent buildings of antiquity, sometimes from an indiscreet zeal for religion, sometimes in revenge, or to make use of the materials. They neglected the cultivation of the royal gardens, cut down the woods, and reduced that country to such a state, the magnificence of its former kings could not now find belief, were it not confirmed by the testimony of those who were the causes of its annihilation.

Not only the palaces, but all the other places of pleasure, were kept in exquisite order and neatness, even those which were seldom or never visited; as there was nothing in which he took more pride than the cleanliness of his own person, and of every thing else which was his. He bathed regularly every day, and had baths, therefore, in all his palaces. Every day he wore four dresses; and that which he once put off, he never after used again: these were reserved as largesses for the nobles who served him, and the soldiers who behaved gallantly in war. Every morning,

SECT. IV.  
The good  
and bad of  
Montezuma.



## BOOK V.

morning, according to the accounts given by some historians, upwards of a thousand men were employed by him in sweeping and watering the streets of the city.

In one of the royal buildings was an armory filled with all kind of offensive and defensive arms, which were made use of by those nations, with military ornaments, and ensigns. He kept a surprising number of artificers at work, in manufacturing these and other things. He had numerous artists constantly busied likewise, namely, goldsmiths, Mosaic work-men, sculptors, painters, and others. One whole district consisted solely of dancing-masters, who were trained up to entertain him.

His zeal for religion was not less conspicuous than his magnificence. He built several temples to his gods, and made frequent sacrifices to them, observing with great punctuality the established rites and ceremonies. He was extremely careful that all the temples, and in particular the greater temple of Mexico, should be well kept, and exquisitely clean; but his vain fear of the auguries and pretended oracles of those false divinities totally debased his mind.

He was anxiously attentive to the execution of his orders, and the laws of the kingdom, and was inexorable in punishing transgressors. He tried, frequently, by secret presents, the integrity of his magistrates, and whenever he found any of them guilty, he punished them without remission, even if they were of the first rank of the nobility.

He was an implacable enemy to idleness, and, in order to banish it as much as possible from his dominions, he kept his subjects perpetually employed; the military, in constant warlike exercises; the others, in the culture of the fields, and in the construction of new edifices, and other public works; and even beggars, that they might not be totally idle, were enjoined to contribute a certain quantity of those filthy insects which are the breed of nastiness and adherents of wretchedness.

The oppression which he made his vassals feel, the heavy burdens he imposed on them, his own arrogance and pride, and excessive severity in punishments, disgusted his people; but, on the other hand, he gained their love by his liberality in supplying the necessities of individuals, as well as rewarding his generals and ministers. Amongst other things worthy to be recorded with the highest praises, and to be imitated by all princes,

princes, he allotted the city of Colhuacan as an hospital for all invalids, who, after having done faithful service to the crown, either in military or civil employments, required a provision for their age or infirmities. They were there maintained, and attended to at the expence of the king. Such were the good and bad qualities of the celebrated Montezuma; which we have thought proper to lay before the reader here, before we go on to detail the events of his reign.

In the beginning of his government, he put to death Malinalli, lord of Tlachquiauhco, for rebellion against the crown of Mexico; he reduced the state again under his obedience, and conquered, also, that of *Achiotlan*. A little time after, another war broke out more serious and dangerous, in which he was not so successful.

Amongst the many provinces which either voluntarily subjected themselves to the Mexicans from fear of their power, or were conquered by force of arms, the republic of Tlascala remained always unsubdued, having never bowed to the Mexican yoke, although so little distant from the capital of that empire. The Huexotzincas, Cholulans, and other neighbouring states, who were formerly allied with the republic, growing jealous afterwards of its prosperity, exasperated the Mexicans against it, by insinuating that the Tlascalans were desirous of making themselves masters of the maritime provinces on the Mexican gulf, and that by their commerce with those provinces, they were daily increasing their power and their wealth, and were gaining the minds of the people with whom they had traffick. The commerce of the Tlascalans, of which the Huexotzincas complained, was both justifiable and necessary; because, besides that the greater part of the people of these coasts were originally of Tlascala, and considered each other as kindred and relations; the Tlascalans were under the necessity of providing themselves from thence with what cocoas, cotton, and salt they wanted. Nevertheless the representations of the Huexotzincas had such influence on the Mexicans, that since the time of Montezuma I. all the kings of Mexico had treated the Tlascalans as the greatest enemies of the empire, and had always maintained strong garrisons on the frontiers of Tlascala, to obstruct their commerce with the maritime parts.

The Tlascalans finding themselves deprived of their freedom of commerce, and consequently of the means of obtaining some of the necessities

SECT. V.  
War of Tlascala.



BOOK IV. of life, resolved to send an embassy to the Mexican nobility, (probably in the time of king Axayacatl) complaining of the wrong done them through the false insinuations of their rivals. The Mexicans who were become insolent from prosperity, replied, that the king of Mexico was lord of all the world, and all mortals were his vassals; and that as such, the Tlascalans should render him due obedience, and acknowledge him by tribute, after the example of other nations; but if they refused subjection, they must perish without remedy, their city would be sacked, and their country given to be inhabited by another race of people. To so arrogant and weak an answer, the ambassador returned those spirited words: "Most powerful lords, Tlascala owes you no subscription, nor  
 " have the Tlascalans ever acknowledged any prince with tributes since  
 " their ancestors left the countries in the North, to inhabit this land.  
 " They have always preserved their liberty, and being unaccustomed to  
 " the slavery to which you pretend to subject them, rather than sub-  
 " mit to your power, they will shed more blood than their fathers  
 " shed in the famous battle of Pojauhtlan."

The Tlascalans alarmed at the arrogant and ambitious pretensions of the Mexicans, and despairing of being able to bring them to any amicable agreement, resolved at last to fortify their frontiers to prevent an invasion. They had already inclosed the lands of the republic with intrenchments, and established good garrisons on their frontiers: the threats of the Mexicans made them increase their fortifications, and strengthen their garrisons, and construct that famous wall six miles in length, which prevented the enemy from entering in the quarter of the west, where danger was chiefly to be apprehended. They were frequently attacked by the Huexotzincas, the Cholulans, the Itzocanese, the Tecamachalchese, and other states which were neighbouring, or but little distant from Mexico; but they never could wrest a foot of land from the republic, owing to the watchful attention of the Tlascalans, and the bravery with which they resisted their invaders.

A great many subjects of the crown of Mexico had taken refuge in the country of Tlascala, particularly some of the Chalchese nation, and the Otómies of Xaltocan who fled from the ruin of their native countries, in the wars above-mentioned. They bore an inveterate hatred to the Mexicans, from the evils which they had suffered, and appeared, there-

therefore, to the Tlascalans, to be the fittest people to give vigorous opposition to their enemies ; in this they were not deceived ; for the Mexicans found no resistance more powerful than that which they met with from these exiles, especially the Otomies composing the frontier garrisons, who served the republic with great fidelity, and were rewarded with the highest honours and employments.

All the time that Axayacatl and his successors reigned, the Tlascalans continued to be obstructed in their commerce with the maritime provinces, by which means the common people were so much in want of salt, that they grew accustomed to eat their food without that seasoning, and did not return to the use of it for many years after the conquest ; but the nobles, or at least some of them, had secret correspondence with some Mexican lords, and got a supply of what was necessary, without the populace of either country having any knowledge of it. Every person knows that in all general calamities, the poor are those who suffer the greatest hardships, while those of better circumstances escape, or at least find means by their wealth to soften and relieve them.

Montezuma being unable to endure a refusal of obedience and homage from the little republic of Tlascala, while so many nations, even the most distant, were tributary to him, ordered in the beginning of his reign, the states in its neighbourhood to muster their troops, and attack the republic on every side. The Huexotzincas, in confederacy with the Cholulans, quickly raised their forces, under command of Tecajahuatzin, the chief of the state of Huexotzinco ; but confiding more in their arts than their strength, they tried to draw over to their party, by bribes and promises, the inhabitants of Huejotlipan, a city of the republic, situated on the frontiers of the kingdom of Acolhuacan, and the Otomies, who guarded the other frontiers ; but neither would be prevailed upon : on the contrary, they declared they were resolved to die in defence of the republic. Upon which the Huexotzincas, being obliged to make use of their strength, entered with such fury into the boundaries of Tlascala, that the frontier garrison was not able to withstand them : they committed great slaughter, and advanced as far as *Xiloxochitla*, which was only three miles distant from the capital. There they met with a stout resistance from *Texatlacatzin*, a celebrated Tlascalan captain, who fell at last however, being



## BOOK V.

overcome by the multitude of his enemies. Finding themselves so near the capital, they conceived such a dread of the vengeance of the Tlascalans, that they retreated precipitately to their own territories. Such was the commencement of the continual battles and the hostilities which subsisted between the two states until the arrival of the Spaniards. We are uninformed by history whether the other states in the neighbourhood of Tlascala were engaged in the war: perhaps, the Huexotzincas and Cholulans were unwilling to let any other have a share in their glory.

The Tlascalans were now so enraged against the Huexotzincas, that they did not confine themselves any longer to the defence of their state, but frequently sallied out upon the enemy. At one time they attacked them at the foot of the mountains, which lie to the west of Huexotzinco, and reduced them to such difficulties, that finding themselves unable for resistance, they demanded assistance from Montezuma, who immediately ordered an army under the command of his first-born son to their relief. This army marched across the southern border of the mountain and volcano Popocatepec, where it was increased with the troops of Chietlan and Itzocan, and from thence it entered by Quauhquechollan into the valley of Atlixco. The Tlascalans having intelligence of this route, posted themselves in the way to fall upon the Mexicans before they could join the Huexotzincas. The attack was so sudden and unexpected on the Mexicans that they were defeated, and the Tlascalans taking advantage of their disorder, made a considerable havoc of them. Amongst others who were slain, the prince the general was one, on whom so important a post had been conferred probably more from an intention to add this honour to the nobleness of his birth than from respect to his skill in the art of war. The rest of the army was put to flight, and the conquerors returned to Tlascala loaded with spoils. It is much to be wondered at that they did not pour immediately upon the city of Huexotzinco, as they might have expected it would have easily surrendered; but, perhaps, the victory was not so complete, but that many of their people fell in the battle, and that they thought it more prudent to enjoy the immediate fruits of victory, and return afterwards with more forces to the war. They quickly returned, but they were repulsed by the Huexotzincas, who  
were

were now fortified, so that they retreated to Tlascala without any other advantage than laying waste the fields of the Huexotzincas and Cholulans; by which these people were so reduced as to be forced to seek provision in Mexico and other places.

Montezuma was deeply affected with the death of his first-born son; and the defeat of his army: upon which he commanded another army to be raised in the provinces surrounding Tlascala, to block up the whole republic; but the Tlascalans foreseeing the hostility of the Mexicans, had made extraordinary fortifications, and strengthened all their garrisons. The contest became vigorous on both sides; but at last the royal troops were repulsed, leaving no small share of riches in the hands of their enemies. The Tlascalans celebrated this victory with great rejoicings, and rewarded the Otomies, to whom it was chiefly owing, by advancing the most respectable among them to the dignity of *Texetli*, which was in the greatest esteem among them, and giving daughters of the most noble Tlascalans in marriage to the heads of that nation.

It is not to be doubted that if the king of Mexico had been seriously bent on the reduction of the Tlascalans, he would in the end have subjected them to his crown; because although the strength of the republic was considerable, its troops warlike, and its places strong, they were still inferior to the Mexicans in resources and power. From which it appears probable, as historians affirm, that the kings of Mexico, although they had conquered the most distant provinces, designedly let the republic of Tlascala exist, which is scarcely sixty miles distant from that capital; not only that they might have an enemy at hand against whom they might exercise their troops; but likewise that they might always be able to procure with ease victims for their sacrifices. The frequent attacks which they made on the different places of Tlascala, served for both these purposes.

Among the Tlascalani victims in the history of Mexico, a very famous general, named *Tlahuicol*, is extremely worthy of memory (g). His courage, and the uncommon strength of his arms, were unequalled and wonderful. The *maquahuatl*, or Mexican sword, with which he

SECT. VI.  
Tlahuicol, a  
celebrated  
general of  
the Tlascalans.

(g) The event respecting this officer happened in the last years of Montezuma's reign; but on account of its connection with the war of Tlascala we have thought proper to introduce it here.

fought



## BOOK IV.

fought, was so weighty, that a man of ordinary strength could hardly raise it from the ground. His name was a terror to the enemies of the republic, and wherever he appeared in arms, they fled before him. In an assault which the Huexotzincas made upon a garrison of the Ottomies, he got inadvertently, during the heat of the engagement, into a marsh, where not being able to move with sufficient agility, he was made prisoner, confined in a strong cage, carried to Mexico, and presented to Montezuma. The king, who could esteem merit even in his enemies, instead of putting him to death, graciously granted him liberty to return to his native country; but the proud Tlascalcan would not accept the favour, pretending that as he had been made prisoner, he had not confidence to present himself after such dishonour before his countrymen. He said he desired to die like the other prisoners, in honour of their god. Montezuma observing his aversion to return to his country, and at the same time being unwilling to deprive the world of a man who was so renowned, continued to entertain him at his court, in hopes of making him a friend to the Mexicans, and gaining his services to the crown. In the mean time a war broke out with the Michuacanese, the reasons and particulars of which we know not, when Montezuma committed the command of the army which he sent to Tlaximalojan, the frontier as we have already mentioned of Michuacan, to Tlahuicol. Tlahuicol corresponded faithfully with the trust reposed in him; for although he could not dislodge the enemy from the place where they were fortified, yet he made many prisoners, and brought off a great quantity of gold and silver. Montezuma was sensible of his services, and again made him offers of liberty; but this being refused as formerly, he was offered the honourable post of *Tlacatecatl*, general of the Mexican arms. To this the Tlascalcan nobly answered, that he would never be a traitor to his country, that he desired positively to die, provided it might be in the gladiatorian sacrifice, which as it was reserved for the most respectable prisoners, would therefore be more honourable to him. This celebrated general passed three years in Mexico with one of his wives, who came there from Tlascala to live with him. It is probable, that the Mexicans brought her to him that he might leave them some posterity, to ennoble with his virtues the court and kingdom of Mexico. The king perceiving at last the obstinacy with which he refused

fused every offer which was made him, yielded to his barbarous inclination, and appointed the day of the sacrifice. Eight days before the arrival of that day, they began to celebrate the occasion with entertainments of dancing; after which, they, in presence of the king, the nobility, and an immense croud of people, put the Tlascalan prisoner, tied by one foot, upon the *Temalacatl*, or the large round stone on which such sacrifices were made. Several brave men came on, one at a time, to fight with him, of whom, according to report, he killed eight and wounded twenty, until at last falling almost dead from a severe blow which he received on the head, they carried him before the idol of Huitzilopochtli, where the priests opened his breast and took out his heart, and threw the body down the stair of the temple according to the established rites. Thus fell this famous general, whose courage and fidelity to his country, had he lived in more enlightened times, would have raised him high in the rank of heroes.

During the time in which war was carrying on against the Tlascalans, some provinces of the empire were distressed with a famine, occasioned by two years of dry weather. All the grain which individuals possessed being consumed, the king had an opportunity of shewing his liberality; he opened all his granaries, and distributed among his subjects all the maize which was in them; but this not being sufficient to relieve their necessities, in imitation of Montezuma I. he permitted them to go to other countries to procure their subsistence. The following year, 1505, having had an abundant harvest, the Mexicans went to war against Guatemala, a province upwards of nine hundred miles distant from Mexico in the south-east. During the continuance of this war, occasioned probably by some hostilities offered to some of the subjects of the crown, the building of a temple, erected in honour of the goddess *Centiotl*, was finished at Mexico, the consecration of which was celebrated with the sacrifice of the prisoners made in that war.

They had, during this season also, enlarged the road upon the lake from Chapoltepec to Mexico, and repaired the aqueduct which was upon that road, but the rejoicings which the conclusion of such a labour excited were interrupted by the turret of another temple, called *Zomolli*, being set on fire by lightning. The inhabitants of that part  
of

SECT. VII.  
Famine in the  
provinces of  
the empire,  
and public  
works in the  
capital.



## BOOK V.

of the city which was most distant from the temple, and especially the Tlatelolcos, having perceived no lightning, were persuaded that the burning was caused by enemies come unexpectedly into the city, upon which they immediately rose in arms to defend it, and ran in troops towards the temple. Montezuma being suspicious that it was a mere pretence of the Tlatelolcos to raise a sedition, as he was always diffident of them, was so provoked at their disturbance, that he deprived them of all the public offices which they held, and even forbade their appearance at court, neither protestations of their innocence, nor prayers with which they implored the royal mercy, having sufficient weight to make him alter his resolution; but as soon as the first heat of his passion was over, they were reinstated in their employments and his favour.

SECT. VIII.  
Rebellion of  
the Mixtecas  
and Zapotecas.

In the mean while the Mixtecas and Zapotecas rebelled against the crown. The principal leaders of the rebellion, in which all the lords of each nation had engaged, were *Cetecpatl*, lord of Coaxitlahuacan, and *Mochuixochitl*, lord of Tzotzollan. First of all they treacherously murdered all the Mexicans in the garrisons of Huayjacac and other places. As soon as Montezuma had information of the rebellion, he sent a large army against them, composed of Mexicans, Tezcucans, and Tepanecas, under the command of prince Cuitlahuac, his brother and successor in the crown. The rebels were totally defeated, a great many of them taken prisoners with their chiefs, and their cities sacked. The army returned to Mexico loaded with spoils, the prisoners were sacrificed, and the state of Tzotzollan was given to *Coxcaquaubtli*, the brother of Nahuixochitl, for his fidelity to the crown, preferring the duties of a subject to the ties of blood; but *Cetecpatl* was not sacrificed, as he had not yet discovered all his accomplices in the rebellion, and the designs of the rebels.

SECT. IX.  
Contest between  
the Huexotzin-  
cas and Cholulans.

Some little time after this expedition, a dispute and quarrel arose between the Huexotzincas and the Cholulans their friends and neighbours, which as it was left to be decided by arms, occasioned a pitched battle to be fought. The Cholulans being more versed in the forms of religion, in commerce, and the arts than skilled in the science of war, were soon defeated, and forced to retreat to their city, where their enemies pursued them, killed some of their people, and burned some of their houses. The Huexotzincas had hardly gained the victory when they found cause to repent

repent it, on account of the chastisement which they apprehended would follow it; that they might prevent this, they sent two respectable persons to king Montezuma, whose names were *Tolimpanecatli*, and *Tzoncoztli*, who were to justify them, and lay the blame on the Cholulans. These ambassadors, either with a design to magnify the courage of their citizens, or from some other motive, exaggerated the slaughter made of the Cholulans to such a degree, that the king believed they were all cut to pieces, or that the few whose lives had been saved had abandoned the city. On hearing this account Montezuma was extremely afflicted, and dreaded the revenge of the god *Quelzalcoatl*, whose sanctuary, which was one of the most celebrated and most honoured of all that land, he conceived to have been profaned by the Huexotzincas. Having consulted, therefore, with the two allied kings, he sent some persons from his court to Cholula, to gain just information of this transaction; and having found it very different from the representation given by the Huexotzincas, he was so enraged at their deceit to him, that he suddenly dispatched an army, with orders to his general, to punish them severely if they did not make a suitable apology and submission. The Huexotzincas, foreseeing the storm which was likely to pour upon them, went out in order of battle to meet the Mexicans; but the Mexican general advanced towards them to explain his commission in the following words: “ Our lord  
 “ Montezuma, who has his court in the middle of the water, Neza-  
 “ hualpilli, who commands upon the borders of the lake, and Toto-  
 “ quihuatzi who reigns at the foot of the mountains, have ordered us  
 “ to tell you, that having learned from your ambassadors that you have  
 “ ruined Cholula and killed its inhabitants, they feel the utmost af-  
 “ fliction, and are under an obligation to revenge the violent outrage  
 “ which has been offered to the venerable sanctuary of *Quelzalcoatl*.”  
 The Huexotzincas protested that the account given by their ambassadors was extravagant and false, and that a body of men so respectable as the citizens of Huexotzinco, could not be the authors of it, and declared themselves ready to satisfy all the three kings by punishment of the guilty. Upon which having summoned their ambassadors, and cut off their ears and noses, that being the punishment destined for those who sold falsehoods pernicious to the state, they delivered them up to the general. Thus they escaped the evils of war, which otherwise would have been inevitable.



## BOOK V.

SECT. X.  
Expedition  
against At-  
lixco and  
other places.

The Atlixchese, who had rebelled against the crown, met with a very different fate; they were defeated by the Mexicans, and many of them made prisoners. This happened precisely in the month of February, 1506, when, on account of the termination of the century, the great festival of the renewal of the fire was celebrated with still greater pomp and solemnity than under the reign of Montezuma I. or in other secular years. This, which was the most solemn, was also the last festival of the kind celebrated by the Mexicans. A great number of prisoners were sacrificed at it; a great many also were reserved for the festival of the dedication of *Tzompantli*, which, as we have observed above, was an edifice close to the greater temple, where the skulls of the victims were strung together and preserved.

SECT. XI.  
Presages of  
the war with  
the Spaniards.

This secular year appears to have past without war; but in 1507, the Mexicans made an expedition against Tzollan and Micltlan, two states of the Mixtecas, whose inhabitants fled to the mountains, and left the Mexicans no other advantage than that of making a few prisoners of those who remained in their houses. From thence they proceeded to subdue Quauhquechollan which was in rebellion, in which war the prince Cuitlahuac the general of the army, made a display of his courage. Some brave Mexican officers fell in this expedition; but the rebels were reduced under the yoke, and three thousand two hundred taken prisoners, who were sacrificed, one part of them at the festival *Tlacaxipehualiztli*, which took place in the second Mexican month; and another part of them at the dedication of the sanctuary Zomolli, which was rebuilt after the burning of it before mentioned, with greater magnificence than it was at first.

In the year following the royal army of the Mexicans, Tezcucans, and Tepanecas, set out against the distant province of Amatla. On their march, which lay over a very lofty mountain, they were attacked by a furious north wind, accompanied with snow, which made great havoc in the army, as some of them who were accustomed to a mild climate, and travelling almost without cloathing, perished with cold, and others were beat down by the trees which were rooted up by the wind. Of the remainder of the army which continued their journey but feebly, to Amatla, the greater part died in battle.

These and other calamities together with the appearance of a comet at that time, threw all the princes of Anahuac into the utmost consternation.

tion. Montezuma, who was too superstitious to look with indifference on so uncommon a phenomenon, consulted his astrologers upon it; but they being unable to divine its meaning, applied to the king of Acolhuacan, who was reputed able in astrology, and in the art of divination. These kings, although they were related to, and perpetual allies of, each other, did not live in much harmony together, the king of Acolhuacan having put to death his son *Huexotzincatzin*, as we shall see presently, paying no regard to the prayers of Montezuma, who, as the uncle of that prince, had interfered in his behalf. For a long time past they had neither met with their usual frequency, nor confidence; but on this occasion the mysterious dread which seized the mind of Montezuma incited him to profit by the knowledge of the king Nezahualpilli, for which reason he intreated him to come to Mexico to consult with him upon an event which appeared equally to concern them both. Nezahualpilli went, and after having conferred, at length, with Montezuma, was of opinion, according to the account of historians, that the comet predicted the future disasters of those kingdoms, by the arrival of a new people. This interpretation, however, being unsatisfactory to Montezuma, Nezahualpilli challenged him at the game of foot-ball, which was frequently played at even by those kings themselves; and it was agreed between them that if the king of Mexico gained the party, the king of Acolhuacan should renounce his interpretation, adjudging it to be false; but if Nezahualpilli came off victor, Montezuma should acknowledge and admit it to be true: a folly though truly ridiculous in those men, to believe the truth of a prediction could depend on the dexterity of the player, or the fortune of the game; but less pernicious, however than that of the ancient Europeans, who decided on truth, innocence, and honour, by a barbarous duel and the fortune of arms. Nezahualpilli remained victor in the game, and Montezuma disconsolate at the loss and the confirmation of so fatal a prognostic: he was willing, however, to try other methods, hoping to find some more favourable interpretation which might counterbalance that of the king of Acolhuacan, and the disgrace he had suffered at play: he consulted therefore a very famous astrologer who was much versed in the superstitious art of divination, by which he had rendered his name so celebrated in that land, and acquired so great a respect, that without ever stirring abroad from his house he was considered and consulted by the kings



BOOK V. themselves as an oracle. He knowing, without doubt, what had happened between the two kings, instead of returning a propitious answer to his sovereign, or at least one which was equivocal, as such prognosticators generally do, confirmed the fatal prophecy of the Tezcucan. Montezuma was so enraged at the answer, that in return he made his house be pulled to pieces, leaving the unhappy diviner buried amidst the ruins of his sanctuary.

These and other similar presages of the fall of that empire appear represented in the paintings of the Americans, and are related in the histories of the Spaniards. We are far from thinking that all that which has been wrote on this subject is deserving of credit; but neither can we doubt of the tradition which prevailed among the Americans, that a new people totally different from the native inhabitants, were to arrive at that kingdom and make themselves masters of that country. There has not been in the country of Anahuac any nation more or less polished which has not confirmed this tradition either by verbal testimony or their own histories.

It is impossible to guess at the origin of a tradition so universal as this; but the event which I am going to relate, is said to have been public, and to have made a considerable noise; to have happened also in the presence of the two kings and the Mexican nobility. It is represented in some of the paintings of those nations, and a legal attestation of it even was sent to the court of Madrid (*b*). Though in compliance with the duty of a historian, we give a place to many of the memorable traditions of those nations; on these, however, we leave our readers to form their own judgment and comments.

SECT. XII.  
Memorable  
event of a  
Mexican  
princess.

*Papantzin*, a Mexican princess, and sister of Montezuma, was married to the governor of Tlatelolco, and after his death lived in his palace until the year 1509, when she likewise died of old age. Her funeral was celebrated with magnificence suitable to her exalted birth, the king her brother, and all the nobility of Mexico and Tlatelolco being present. Her body was buried in a subterraneous cavern, in the garden of the same palace, near to a fountain where she had used to bathe, and the mouth of the cave was shut with a stone. The day following, a child of five or six years of age happened to pass from her mother's apartment to that of the major-domo of the deceased princess, which

(*b*) See Torquemada, lib. ii. cap. 91, and Betencourt, Part iii. Trat. i. cap. 8.

was

was on the other side of the garden ; and in passing saw the princess sitting upon the steps of the fountain, and heard herself called by her by the word *Cocoton* (i), which is a word of tenderness used to children. The little child not being capable, on account of its age, of reflecting on the death of the princess, and thinking that she was going to bathe as usual, approached without fear, upon which she sent the child to call the wife of her major-domo ; the child went to call her, but the woman smiling and caressing her, told her, “ My little girl, Papantzin is dead, “ and was buried yesterday ; ” but as the child insisted, and pulled her by her gown, she, more to please, than from belief of what was told her, followed her ; but was hardly come in sight of the princess, when she was seized with such horror that she fell fainting to the earth. The little girl ran to acquaint her mother, who, with two other companions came out to give assistance ; but on seeing the princess they were so affected with fear, that they would have swooned away if the princess herself had not endeavoured to comfort them, assuring them she was still alive. She made them call her major-domo, and charged him to go and bear the news to the king her brother ; but he durst not undertake it, as he dreaded that the king would consider the account as a fable, and would punish him with his usual severity for being a liar, without examining into the matter. Go then to Tezcucó, said the princess, and intreat the king Nezahualpilli, in my name, to come here and see me. The major-domo obeyed, and the king having received the information, set out immediately for Tlatelolco. When he arrived there, the princess was in a chamber of the palace ; though full of astonishment, the king saluted her, when she requested him to go to Mexico, to tell the king her brother that she was alive, and had occasion to see him, to communicate some things to him of the utmost importance. The king set out for Mexico to execute her commission ; but Montezuma would hardly give credit to what was told him. However, that he might not do injustice to so respectable an ambassador, he went along with him, and many of the Mexican nobility to Tlatelolco, and having entered the hall where the princess was, he demanded of her if she was his sister. “ I am, indeed, sir,” answered the princess, “ your sister Papantzin, whom you buried yesterday ; I am truly alive,

(i) *Cocoton* means little girl, only that it is an expression of more tenderness.



## BOOK V.

“ and wish to relate to you what I have seen, as it deeply concerns you.”  
 Upon this the two kings sat down, while all the other nobles continued standing full of admiration at what they saw.

The princess then began to speak as follows : “ After I was dead,  
 “ or if you will not believe that I have been dead, after I remained be-  
 “ rest of motion and of sense, I found myself suddenly placed upon  
 “ an extensive plain, to which there appeared no boundaries. In the  
 “ middle of it I observed a road which I afterwards saw was divided  
 “ into a variety of paths, and on one side ran a great river whose wa-  
 “ ters made a frightful noise. As I was going to throw myself into the  
 “ river to swim to the opposite bank, I saw before me a beautiful youth  
 “ of handsome stature, clothed in a long habit, white as snow, and  
 “ dazzling like the sun ; he had wings of beautiful feathers, and upon  
 “ his forehead, this mark,” (in saying this the princess made the sign  
 of the cross with her two fore fingers, “ and laying hold of my hand,  
 “ said to me, *Stop, for it is not yet time to pass this river. God loves thee,*  
 “ *though thou knowest it not.* He then led me along by the river-side,  
 “ upon the borders of which I saw a great number of human skulls  
 “ and bones, and heard most lamentable groans that waked my utmost  
 “ pity. Turning my eyes afterwards upon the river, I saw some large  
 “ vessels upon it filled with men of a complexion and dress quite dif-  
 “ ferent from ours. They were fair and bearded, and carried stand-  
 “ ards in their hands, and helmets on their heads. The youth then  
 “ said to me, *It is the will of God that thou shalt live to be a witness*  
 “ *of the revolutions which are to happen to these kingdoms. The groans*  
 “ *which thou hast heard among these bones, are from the souls of your*  
 “ *ancestors, which are ever and will be tormented for their crimes.*  
 “ *The men whom you see coming in these vessels, are those who by*  
 “ *their arms will make themselves masters of all these kingdoms, and*  
 “ *with them will be introduced the knowledge of the true God, the creator*  
 “ *of heaven and earth. As soon as the war shall be at an end, and the*  
 “ *bath published and made known which will wash away sin, be thou the*  
 “ *first to receive it, and guide by thy example the natives of thy country.*  
 “ Having spoke this the youth disappeared, and I found myself re-  
 “ called to life ; I rose from the place where I lay, raised up the stone  
 “ of

“ of my sepulchre, and came out to the garden where I was found by my domestics.”

Montezuma was struck with astonishment at the recital of so strange an adventure, and feeling his mind distracted with a variety of apprehensions, rose and retired to one of his palaces which was destined for occasions of grief, without taking leave of his sister, the king of Tacuba, or any one of those who accompanied him, although some of his flatterers, in order to console him, endeavoured to persuade him that the illness which the princess had suffered, had turned her brain. He avoided for ever after returning to see her, that he might not again hear the melancholy presages of the ruin of his empire. The princess, it is said, lived many years in great retirement and abstinence. She was the first who, in the year 1524, received the sacred baptism in Tlatelolco, and was called from that time, *Donna Maria Papantzin*.

Among the memorable events, in 1510, there happened without any apparent cause, a sudden and furious burning of the turrets of the greater temple of Mexico, in a calm, serene night; and in the succeeding year, so violent and extraordinary an agitation of the waters of the lake, that many houses of the city were destroyed, there being at the same time no wind, earthquake, nor any other natural cause to which the accident could be ascribed. It is said also, that in 1511, the figures of armed men appeared in the air, who fought and slew each other. These and other similar phenomena, recounted by Acofta, Torquemada and others, are found very exactly described in the Mexican and Acolhuan histories.

SECT. XII.  
Uncommon  
occurrences.

The consternation which these sad omens raised in the mind of Montezuma did not, however, turn aside his thoughts from war. His armies made numerous expeditions in 1508, particularly against the Tlascalans and Huexotzincas, the Atlixchese, Icpatepec, and Malinaltepec, in which they made five thousand prisoners, which were afterwards sacrificed. In 1509, the war against Xochitepec happened, that state having rebelled. In the year following, Montezuma thinking the altar for the sacrifices too small, and unproportioned to the magnificence of the temple, he caused a proper stone of excessive size, to be sought for, which was found near to Cojoacan. After ordering it to be polished and cut, he commanded it to be brought in due form to Mexico. A

SECT. XIII.  
Erection of a  
new altar for  
the sacrifices,  
and new ex-  
peditions of  
the Mexicans.

vast.



## BOOK V.

vaſt number of people went to drag it along, but in paſſing a wooden bridge over a canal, in the entry to the city, the ſtone by its enormous weight, broke through the bridge and fell into the canal, drawing ſome men after it, and among the reſt, the high prieſt, who was accompanying it, and ſcattering incenſe. The king and the people were a good deal diſconcerted by this miſfortune; but without giving up the undertaking, they drew the ſtone, with prodigious labour and fatigue, out of the water, and brought it to the temple, where it was conſecrated with the ſacrifice of all the priſoners that had been reſerved for this great feſtival, which was one of the moſt ſolemn ever celebrated by the Mexicans. The king invited the principal nobility of all his kingdom to it, and expended a great deal of his treaſure in preſents which he made to the nobles and populace. In this ſame year the conſecration of the temple *Tlamatzinco* was celebrated, and alſo that of *Quaxicalco*, of which we ſhall ſpeak elſewhere. The victims ſacrificed at the conſecration of theſe two edifices, and the altar of the ſacrifices, were, according to the account of hiſtorians, twelve thouſand two hundred and ten, in number.

To have been able to furniſh ſuch a number of victims, they muſt have been continually at war. In 1511, the Jopas rebelled, and deſigned to kill all the Mexican garrifon in Tlacotepec; but their intentions being reaſonably diſcovered, they were puniſhed accordingly, and two hundred of them carried priſoners to Mexico. In 1512, an army of the Mexicans marched towards the north, againſt the Quitzalapanefe, and with the loſs only of ninety-five men, they made one thouſand and three hundred priſoners, which were alſo carried to Mexico. By theſe and other conqueſts made in the three following years, the Mexican empire was extended to its utmoſt limits, five or ſix years previous to its fall, to which the very great rapidity of its conqueſts contributed. Every province, and place which was conquered, created a new enemy to the conquerors, who became impatient of the yoke to which they were not accuſtomed, and irritated by injuries, only waited for an opportunity of being revenged, and reſtoring themſelves to their wonted liberty. It would appear that the happineſs of a kingdom conſiſts not in the extenſion of its dominions, nor in the number of its vaffals; but on the contrary, that it approaches at no time nearer to its final period, than when

when on account of its vast and unbounded extent, it can no longer maintain the necessary union among its parts, nor that vigour which is requisite to withstand the multitude of its enemies.

The revolutions which happened at this time, in the kingdom of Acolhuacan, occasioned by the death of king Nezahualpilli, did not less contribute to the ruin of the Mexican empire. This celebrated king after having possessed the throne for forty-five years, either wearied of governing, or troubled with melancholy, from the fatal phenomena he had witnessed, left the reins of government in the hands of two of the royal princes, and retired to his palace of pleasure in Tezcozincó, carrying with him his favourite Xocotzin and a few servants, leaving orders to his sons not to leave the court, but to wait there for his farther commands. During the six months of his retirement, he amused himself frequently with the exercise of the chase, and at night used to employ himself in observing the heavens, and for that purpose had constructed, on the terrace of his palace, a little observatory, which was preserved for a century after, and was seen by some Spanish historians who mention it. He there not only studied the motion and course of the stars, but conversed with those who were intelligent in astronomy: that science having always been in esteem among them, they applied still more to it when excited by the examples of the great Nezahualcojotl, and his son and successor.

SECT. XIV.  
Death and  
eulogium of  
king Neza-  
hualpilli.

After living six months in this private manner, he returned to his court, ordered his beloved Xocotzin to retire with her children into the palace of *Tecpilpan*, and shut himself up in the palace of his usual residence, without letting himself be seen by any person but one of his confidants, designing to conceal his death in imitation of his father. Accordingly, neither the time nor the circumstances of his death have ever been known. All that is certain is, that he died in 1516, and that before his death he commanded his confidants who were about him to burn his body secretly. From hence it happened that many of the vulgar, and even several of the nobles, were persuaded that he was not dead, but had returned to the kingdom of Amquemecan where his ancestors sprung, as he had frequently resolved to do.



## BOOK V.

In matters of religion he was of the same opinion with his great father Nezahualcojotl. He secretly despised the worship of the idols, although he appeared to conform to it with the people. He resembled his father also in his great zeal for the laws, and in the rigorous administration of justice, of which he afforded a striking example in the last years of his reign. There was a law which forbid, on pain of death, the speaking of indecent words in the royal palace. One of the princes his sons, who was named Huexotzincalzon, to whom he bore more affection than to any of the rest, not less on account of his disposition, and the virtues which shone out even in his youth, than of his having been the first born of his sons by his favourite Xocotzin, violated this law; but the words made use of by the prince were rather the effect of youthful indiscretion than of any culpable intention. The king was informed of it by one of his mistresses to whom the words had been addressed. He enquired of her if they had been spoke before any other persons, and finding that the prince's tutors had been present, he retired to an apartment of his palace, destined for occasions of mourning and grief. There he sent for the tutors to examine them. They being afraid of meeting with severe punishment if they concealed the truth, confessed it openly, but at the same time endeavoured to exculpate the prince, by saying, that he neither knew the person to whom he spoke, nor that the words were obscene. But notwithstanding their representations, he ordered the prince to be immediately arrested, and the same day pronounced sentence of death upon him. The whole court was astonished at so rigorous a judgment, the nobles pleaded with prayers and tears in his behalf, and the mother of the prince herself, relying on the king's particular affection for her, presented herself as a plaintiff before him, and in order to move him to compassion, led all her children along with her. But neither reasoning, prayers, nor tears, could bend the king. "My son," he said, "has violated the law. If I pardon him, it will be said, the laws are not binding upon every one. I will let my subjects know that no one will be pardoned a transgression, as I do not even pardon the son whom I dearly love." The queen pierced with the most lively grief, and despairing of being able to shake the constancy of the king, told him, "Since you have banished from your heart all the affections of a  
" father

“ father and a husband for so slight a cause, why do you hesitate to put me to death and these young princes whom I have borne to you ?” The king then with a grave aspect commanded her to retire, as the case was without a remedy. The disappointed queen retreated to her apartment, and there, in company with some of her attendants who went to console her, abandoned herself to grief. In the mean while, those who were charged with the punishment of the prince, continued to delay it, that time might soften the rigour of justice, and give opportunity for the return of parental affection and mercy ; but the king perceiving their intention, commanded that they should immediately do their duty, which accordingly followed, to the general displeasure of the kingdom, and the utmost disgust to Montezuma, not only on account of the relation between himself and the prince, but likewise of the interference which he made in the prince’s favour, having been unsuccessful in procuring a repeal of the sentence. After the punishment was executed, the king shut himself up for forty days in a hall, without letting himself be seen by any one, while he secretly vented his grief, and made the door of his son’s apartment be closed up with a wall, to hide from his sight any remembrancer of his sorrows.

His severity in punishing transgressors was compensated by the compassion which he shewed for the accidental distresses of any of his subjects. There was a window in his palace which looked towards the market-place, covered with blinds, from which he used to observe, without being seen, the people that assembled there ; and whenever he saw any ill clothed woman he made her be called, and after informing himself of her life and condition, he supplied her with what was necessary for herself and family if she had any. Every day at his palace alms were given to the sick and to orphans. There was an hospital at Tezcuco for all those who had lost their eyesight in war, or had become from any other cause unfit for service, where they were supported at the royal expence, according to their stations, and frequently visited by the king himself. In such beneficent acts a great part of his revenues was expended.

The genius and talents of this king have been highly extolled by the historians of that kingdom. He endeavoured to imitate, both in his studies and in the conduct of his life, the example of his father, and



**BOOK V.** his resemblance to him was remarkable. The glory of the Chechemecan kings may be said to have ended with him, as the discord which took place among his children, diminished the splendour of the court, weakened the force of the state, and tended to bring on its final ruin. Nezahualpilli did not declare who was to be his successor in the crown, which all his ancestors had done. We are ignorant, however, of the motive that caused this omission, and which proved so prejudicial to the kingdom of Acolhuacan.

**SECT. XV.**  
Revolutions  
in the king-  
dom of Acol-  
huacan.

As soon as the supreme council of the deceased king were certain of his death, they considered it necessary to elect a successor to him in imitation of the Mexicans. They assembled therefore in order to deliberate on a point of such importance, and the oldest and most respectable person among them taking the lead in the assembly, represented the great disasters which might accrue to the state of Acolhuacan, if the election was retarded: he was of opinion, that the crown fell to the prince Cacamatzin; since, besides his prudence and his courage, he was the first-born of the first Mexican princess whom the late king married. All the other counsellors concurred in this opinion, which was in itself so just and came from a person of such authority. The princes who waited in a hall adjoining for the resolution of the council, were desired to enter there to hear it. When they were all introduced, the principal seat was given to Cacamatzin, who was a youth of twenty-two years, and his brothers Coanocotzin, who was twenty, and Ixtlilxochitl who was eighteen, were placed on each side of him. The same aged counsellor, who had first addressed the assembly, then rose, and declared that the resolution of the council, which included also that of the kingdom, was to give the crown to Cacamatzin, on account of the right of primogeniture. Ixtlilxochitl, who was an ambitious and enterprising youth, opposed it, by saying, that if the king was really dead, he would certainly have named his successor; that his not having done it was a clear evidence of his life, and while the lawful sovereign was living it was criminal in his subjects to name a successor. The council who knew the disposition of Ixtlilxochitl, durst not openly contradict him, but desired Coanocotzin to deliver his opinion. This prince approved and confirmed the determination of the council, and pointed out the inconveniencies which would ensue if the execution of

it

it was delayed. He was contradicted, and taxed with being light and inconsiderate by Ixtlilxochitl, and that he could not perceive while he embraced such an opinion that he was favouring the designs of Montezuma, who was much inclined to Cacamatzin, and used his endeavours to put him on the throne, because he trusted he would find in him a king of wax, to whom he might give what form he pleased. "It is by no means reasonable, dear brother," replied Coanocotzin, "to oppose a resolution which is so prudent and so just; are you not aware that if Cacamatzin was not to be king, the crown would belong not to you but to me." "It is true," said Ixtlilxochitl, "if the right of succession is to be determined by age only, the crown is due to Cacamatzin, and in failure of him to you; but if regard is paid, as it ought to be, to courage, to me it belongs." The counsellors perceiving that the princes were growing gradually more vehement and warm in their altercation, imposed silence on them both, and dismissed the assembly.

The two princes went to their mother the queen Xocotzin to continue their cavil, while Cacamatzin accompanied by many of the nobility, set out immediately for Mexico to inform Montezuma of what had happened, and to demand his assistance. Montezuma, who, besides the attachment he had to the prince, saw the justice of his claim, and the consent of the nation to it, advised him in the first place to secure the royal treasures, and promised to settle the dispute with his brother, and to employ the Mexican arms in his behalf if negotiations for that purpose should not prove sufficient.

Ixtlilxochitl, as soon as he knew of the departure of Cacamatzin, and foresaw the consequences of his application to Montezuma, set out from court with all his partizans, and went to the states which belonged to his tutors in the mountains of Meztitlan. Coanocotzin sent immediate advice to Cacamatzin to return without delay to Tezcucó, and make use of that favourable opportunity for being crowned. Cacamatzin availed himself of this wise counsel, and came to the court accompanied by Cuitlahuazin the brother of Montezuma, and lord of Izta-palapan, and many of the Mexican nobility. Cuitlahuazin, without losing any time, assembled the Tezcucan nobility in the *Hueitētepan*, or the great palace of the king of Acolhuacan, and presented prince Caca-



## BOOK V.

Cacamatzin to be acknowledged by them as their lawful sovereign. He was received as such by them all, and the day for the ceremony of the coronation was fixed ; but this was interrupted by intelligence arriving at court, that the prince Ixtlilzochitl was descending from the mountains of Meztitlan at the head of a great army.

This turbulent youth as soon as he arrived at Meztitlan, assembled all the lords of the places situated in those great mountains, and made them acquainted with his design of opposing his brother Cacamatzin, pretending that it was his zeal for the honour and liberty of the Chechemecan and Acolhuan nations which moved him ; that it would be disgraceful, and even dangerous, to pay obedience to a king, so pliant to the will of the monarch of Mexico ; that the Mexicans had forgot what they owed to the Acolhuan nation, and were desirous of increasing their unjust usurpations with the kingdom of Acolhuacan ; that he for his part was resolved to exert all the courage which God had given him, to defend and save his country from the tyranny of Montezuma. With these arguments, which were probably suggested to him by his tutors, he so fired the minds of those lords, that they all professed themselves willing to serve him with all their forces, and raised so many troops that when the prince descended from the mountains his army it is said amounted to upwards of one hundred thousand men ; whether it was from the dread of his power, or from an inclination to favour his pretensions, he was well received in all the places through which he passed. He sent an embassy from Tepepolco to the Otompanese, commanding them to do obedience to him as their proper king ; but they replied, that as Nezahualpilli was dead, they would acknowledge no other sovereign than Cacamatzin, who had been peaceably accepted at court, and was already in possession of the throne of Acolhuacan. This answer so exasperated the prince, that he went in great wrath against their city. The Otompanese met him in order of battle ; but although they for some time resisted the army of their enemy, they were at last vanquished, and their city was taken by the prince. The lord himself of Otompan fell among the slain, which accident soon accelerated the victory.

This event threw Cacamatzin and all his court into the utmost uneasiness, fearing the enemy might even besiege the capital ; he prepared fortifi-

fortifications against them ; but the prince being contented with seeing himself respected and feared, did not move from Otompan ; but placed guards on the roads, with orders, however, to hurt no person, to hinder no individuals from passing from the court to any other place, and to shew respect and civility to all passengers of rank. Cacamatzin, knowing the forces, and the resolutions of his brother, and considering it would be better for him to sacrifice even a great part of his kingdom than to lose it altogether, with the consent of his brother Coanacotzin, dispatched an embassy to treat of an accommodation with him. He sent to tell him, that he might, if he chose, retain all the dominions in the mountains, as he was contented with the court and the territory of the plain ; that he was willing also to share the revenues of his kingdom with his brother Coanacotzin ; but at the same time he requested him to drop every other pretension, and not to disturb the public tranquillity. The prince answered, that his brothers might act as they thought proper ; that he was pleased that Cacamatzin was in possession of the kingdom of Acolhuacan, that he had no designs against him nor against the state ; that he had no other view in maintaining his army than to oppose the ambitious designs of the Mexicans, who had given grounds for the greatest disgust and suspicions to his father Nezahualpilli ; that if at that time the kingdom was divided for the common interest of the nation, he hoped to see it again united ; that above all things it was necessary to guard against falling into the snares of the crafty Montezuma. Ixtlilxochitl was not deceived in his diffidence of Montezuma, as this king was the very person who, as we shall find hereafter, gave the unfortunate Cacamatzin into the hands of the Spaniards, in spite of the attachment he pretended to him.

This agreement being made with his brother, Cacamatzin remained in peaceable possession of the crown of Acolhuacan ; but with greatly diminished dominions, as he had ceded a very considerable part of the kingdom. Ixtliloxhitl kept his troops constantly in motion, and frequently appeared with his army in the environs of Mexico, daring Montezuma to a single combat with him. But this king was no longer in a state fit to accept such a challenge. The fire which he had in his youth had already begun to die away with age, and domestic luxury had enervated his mind ; nor would it have been prudent to have  
exposed



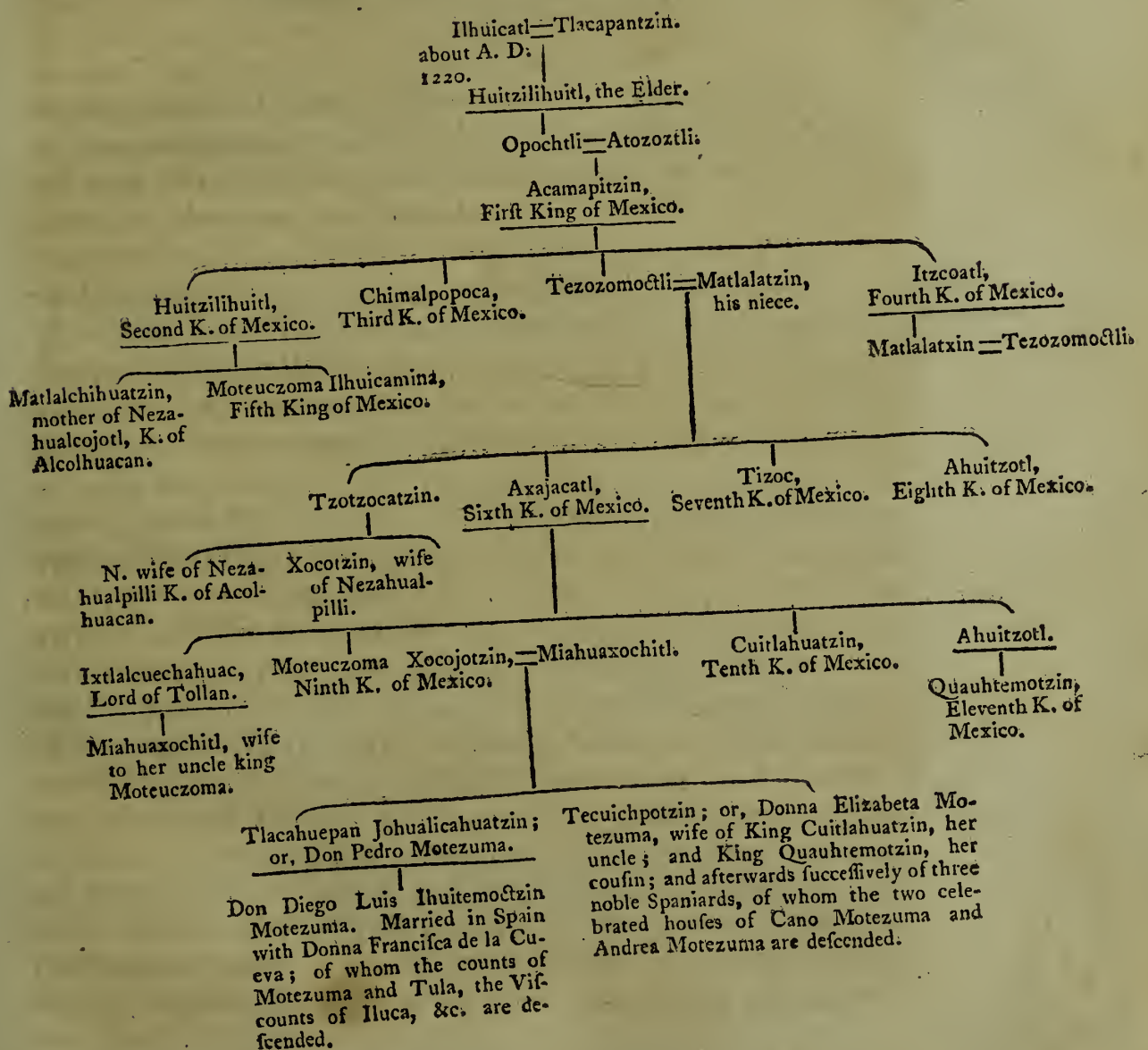
BOOK V.

exposed himself to a rencounter of this kind with so adventurous a youth who had already, by secret negotiations, drawn over a great part of the Mexican provinces to his interest. The Mexicans, however, frequently engaged with that army, being sometimes vanquished, and at other times victorious. In one of those battles a relation of the king of Mexico was taken prisoner, who had gone out to the war with an express resolution to make a prisoner of the prince, and to carry him bound to Mexico according to a promise which he had made to Montezuma. Ixtlilxochitl knew of this boastful promise, and in order to be fully revenged, commanded him to be bound and covered with dry reeds, and burned alive in the sight of the whole army.

In the course of our history it will appear how much this turbulent prince contributed to the success of the Spaniards, who began about this time to make their appearance on the coast of the Gulf of Mexico : but before we undertake the relation of a war which totally reversed the order of those kingdoms, it will be necessary to give some account of the religion, the government, the arts, and manners of the Mexicans.

# GENEALOGY of the MEXICAN KINGS.

Deduced from the Beginning of the Thirteenth Century.

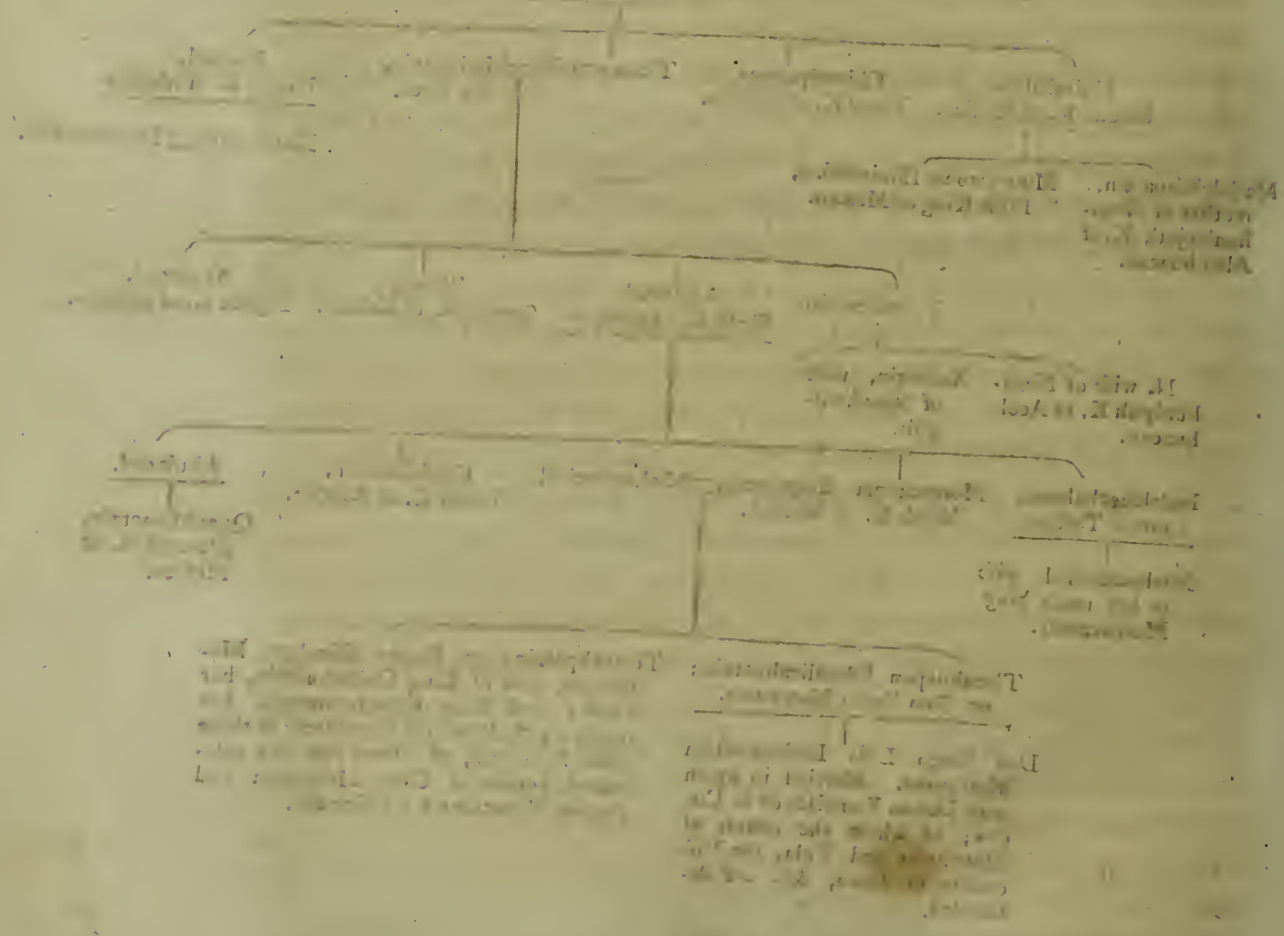




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(11-20-1917)

## B O O K VI.

*The Religion of the Mexicans : namely, their Gods, Temples, Priests, Sacrifices, and Offerings : their Fasts and Austerities, their Chronology, Calendar, and Festivals ; their Ceremonies upon the Birth of Children, at Marriages, and Funerals.*

THE religion, government, and œconomy of a state are the three BOOK VI.  
 things which chiefly form the character of a nation, and without being acquainted with these, it is impossible to have a perfect idea of the genius, dispositions, and knowledge of any people whatever. The religion of the Mexicans, of which we are to give an account in this book, was a heap of errors, of superstitions, and cruel rites. Such weaknesses of the human mind, of which we have had but too many examples even in the most enlightened nations of antiquity, are inseparable from every religion that takes its source in the fantastical imaginations and fears of mankind. If we compare, as we shall do in another place, the religion of the Greeks and Romans with that of the Mexicans, we shall find the former more superstitious and ridiculous, the latter more cruel. These celebrated nations of ancient Europe, from the unfavourable opinion which they entertained of the power of their gods, multiplied their number to excess, confined their influence within narrow bounds, imputed to them the most atrocious crimes, and stained their worship with the most scandalous impurities ; for which they have been justly reproached by the advocates of Christianity. The Mexicans imagined their gods more perfect, and in their worship, however superstitious it might be, there was nothing repugnant to decency.

The Mexicans had some idea, though a very imperfect one, of a supreme, absolute, and independent Being, to whom they acknowledged to owe fear and adoration. They represented him in no external



BOOK VI. form, because they believed him to be invifible; and named him only by the common appellation of God, in their language *Teotl*, a word refembling ftill more in its meaning than in its pronunciation the *Theos* of the Greeks: but they applied to him certain epithets which were highly expreffive of the grandeur and power which they conceived him to poffefs. They called him *Ipalnemoani*, that is, He by whom we live; and *Tlòque Nabuàque*, He who has all in himfelf. But their knowledge and worship of this fupreme Being was obfcured and in a manner loft in the crowd of deities invented by their fuperftition.

They believed in an evil fpirit, the enemy of mankind, which they called *Tlacatecolotl*, or Rational Owl, and faid that he often appeared to men for the purpofe of terrifying or doing them an injury.

With refpect to the foul, the barbarous *Otomies*, as they tell us, believed that it died together with the body: while the Mexicans, with all the other polifhed nations of Anahuac, confidered it as immortal; allowing, at the fame time, that bleffing of immortality to the fouls of brutes, and not reftaining it to rational beings alone (*a*).

They diftinguifhed three places for the fouls when feparated from the body. Thofe of foldiers who died in battle or in captivity among their enemies, and thofe of women who died in labour, went to the houfe of the fun, whom they confidered as the Prince of Glory, where they led a life of endlefs delight; where, every day, at the firft appearance of the fun's rays they hailed his birth with rejoicings; and with dancing, and the mufic of inftruments and of voices, attended him to his meridian; there they met the fouls of the women, and with the fame feftivity accompanied him to his fetting. If religion is intended only to ferve the purpofes of government, as has been imagined by moft of the free-thinkers of our times, furely thofe nations could not forge a fystem of belief better calculated to infpire their foldiers with courage than one which promifed fo high a reward after their death. They next fupposed that thefe fpirits after four years of that glorious life, went to animate clouds, and birds of beautiful feathers and of fweet fong; but always at liberty to rife again to heaven,

(*a*) The ideas here afcribed to the Mexicans, with refpect to the fouls of brutes, will appear more fully when we fhall come to fpeak of their funeral rites.

or to descend upon the earth to warble and suck the flowers. The people of Tlascala believed that the souls of persons of rank went, after their death, to inhabit the bodies of beautiful and sweet singing birds, and those of the nobler quadrupeds; while the souls of inferior persons were supposed to pass into weazles, beetles, and such other meaner animals. Whence we see that the absurd system of the Pythagorean transmigration, which has been so firmly settled, and so widely propagated throughout the countries of the East, has not wanted its advocates in those of the West (*b*). The souls of those that were drowned, or struck by lightning, of those who died by dropsy, tumors, wounds, and other such diseases, went, as the Mexicans believed, along with the souls of children, at least of those which were sacrificed to *Tlaloc* the god of water, to a cool and delightful place, called *Tlalocan*, where that god resided, and where they were to enjoy the most delicious repasts, with every other kind of pleasure. In the inner part of the greater temple of Mexico there was a particular place where they supposed that on a certain day of the year all the children which had been sacrificed to *Tlaloc*, came, and invisibly assisted at the ceremony. The *Mixtecas* had a persuasion, that a great cavern in a lofty mountain, in their province, was the entrance into paradise; and their nobles and great men, therefore, always took care to be buried near the cavern, in order to be nearer that place of delight. Lastly, the third place allotted for the souls of those who suffered any other kind of death, was the *Mictlan*, or hell, which they conceived to be a place of utter darkness, in which reigned a god, called *Mictlantenctli* (lord of hell), and a goddess named *Mictlancibuatl*. I am of opinion that they believed hell to be a place in the centre of the earth (*c*); but they did not imagine that the souls underwent any other punishment there than what they suffered from the darkness of their abode.

(*b*) Who would believe that a system so preposterous and improbable as that of the Pythagorean transmigration, should be supported by a philosopher of the enlightened eighteenth century. Yet it has been seriously maintained, lately, by a Frenchman, in a book printed at Paris, under the title of “The Year Two thousand four hundred and forty.”

(*c*) Dr. Siguenza was of opinion, that the Mexicans placed hell in the northern part of the earth; as the same word *Mictlampa*, signified *towards the North*, and *towards Hell*. But, I rather think they placed it in the center, for that is the meaning of the name of *Tlalxicco*, which they gave to the temple of the god of hell. After all it is possible that the Mexicans themselves might hold different opinions upon the subject.



## BOOK VI.

The Mexicans, with all other civilized nations, had a clear tradition, though somewhat corrupted by fable, of the creation of the world, of the universal deluge, of the confusion of tongues, and of the dispersion of the people; and had actually all these events represented in their pictures (*d*). They said, that when mankind were overwhelmed with the deluge, none were preserved but a man called *Coxcox* (to whom others give the name of *Teocipactli*), and a woman called *Xochiquetzal*, who saved themselves in a little bark, and having afterwards got to land upon a mountain called by them *Colhuacan*, had there a great many children: that these children were all born dumb, until a dove from a lofty tree imparted to them languages, but differing so much that they could not understand one another. The Tlascalans pretended that the men who survived the deluge were transformed into apes, but recovered speech and reason by degrees (*e*).

SECT. II.  
The gods of  
Providence  
and of Hea-  
ven.

Among all the deities worshipped by the Mexicans, and which were very numerous, although not near so much so as those of the Romans, there were *thirteen* principal and greater gods, in honour of whom they consecrated that number. We shall give an account of what we have found in the Mexican mythology with respect to these and the other gods, without regard to the pompous conjectures and absurd system of Cav. Boturini.

*Tezcatlipoca*. This was the greatest god adored in these countries, after the invisible God, or supreme Being, whom we have already mentioned. His name means *Shining Mirror*, from one that was affixed to his image. He was the god of providence, the soul of the world, the creator of heaven and earth, and master of all things. They represented him always young, to denote that no length of years ever diminished his power; they believed that he rewarded with various benefits the just, and punished the wicked with diseases and other afflictions. They placed stone seats in the corners of the streets, for that god to rest upon when he chose it, and upon which no person was ever allowed to sit down. Some said, that he had descended from

(*d*) Their idea of the deluge appears from the representation in the plate annexed, which is copied from an original painting of the Mexicans.

(*e*) For an account of the opinions of the Miztecas and other nations of America, with respect to the creation of the world, I must refer the reader to Father Gregorio Garcia, a Dominican, in his work entitled, *The Origin of the Indians*.

heaven by a rope made of spiders webs, and had persecuted and driven from these countries, the grand priest of Tula *Quetzalcoatl*, who was afterwards consecrated as a god. BOOK VI.

His principal image was of *teotetl* (divine stone) which is a black shining stone like black marble, and was richly dressed. It had golden ear-rings, and from the under lip hung a crystal tube, within which was a green feather, or a turquoise stone, which at first sight appeared to be a gem. His hair was tied with a golden string, from the end of which hung an ear of the same metal, with the appearance of ascending smoke painted on it, by which they intended to represent the prayers of the distressed. The whole breast was covered with massy gold. He had bracelets of gold upon both his arms, an emerald in the navel, and in his left hand a golden fan, set round with beautiful feathers, and polished like a mirror, in which they imagined he saw every thing that happened in the world. At other times to denote his justice, they represented him sitting on a bench covered with a red cloth, upon which were drawn the figures of skulls, and other bones of the dead: upon his left arm a shield with four arrows, and his right lifted in the attitude of throwing a spear: his body dyed black, and his head crowned with quail-feathers.

*Ometeuctli* and *Omecibuatl* (*f*). The former was a god, and the latter a goddess, who they pretended dwelt in a magnificent city in heaven, abounding with delights, and there watched over the world, and gave to mortals their wishes: *Ometeuctli* to men, and *Omecibuatl* to women. They had a tradition that this goddess having had many children in heaven, was delivered of a knife of flint; upon which her children in a rage threw it to the earth, from which when it fell, sprung sixteen hundred heroes, who, knowing their high origin, and having no servants, all mankind having perished in a general calamity, (*g*) agreed to send an embassy to their mother, to intreat her to grant them power to create men to serve them. The mother answered, that if they had had more exalted sentiments, they would have made them-

(*f*) They likewise gave these gods the names of *Citlallatonac*, and *Citlalicue*, upon account of the stars.

(*g*) These people, as we shall mention in another place, believed that the earth had suffered three great universal calamities by which all mankind had been destroyed.



## BOOK VI.

selves worthy to live with her eternally in heaven : but since they chose to abide upon the earth, she desired them to go to *Micllanteuētlī*, god of hell, and ask of him one of the bones of the men that had died ; to sprinkle this with their own blood, and from it they would have a man and a woman who would afterwards multiply. At the same time she warned them to be upon their guard against *Micllanteuētlī*, who after giving the bone might suddenly repent. With these instructions from his mother, *Xolotl*, one of the heroes, went to hell, and after obtaining what he sought, began to run towards the upper surface of the earth : upon which *Micllanteuētlī* enraged pursued him, but being unable to come up with him, returned to hell. *Xolotl* in his precipitate flight stumbled, and falling broke the bone into unequal pieces. Gathering them up again, he continued his course till he arrived at the place where his brothers awaited him ; when they put the fragments into a vessel, and sprinkled them with their blood which they drew from different parts of their bodies. Upon the fourth day they beheld a boy, and continuing to sprinkle with blood for three days more, a girl was likewise formed. They were both consigned to the care of *Xolotl* to be brought up, who fed them with the milk of the thistle. In that way, they believed the recovery of mankind was effected at that time. Thence took its rise, as they affirmed, the practice of drawing blood from different parts of the body, which as we shall see was so common among these nations : and they believed the differences in the stature of men to have been occasioned by the inequality of the pieces of the bone.

*Cihuacohuatl* (woman serpent) called likewise *Quilaxtli*. This they believed to have been the first woman that had children in the world ; and she had always twins. She was esteemed a great goddess, and they said that she would frequently shew herself, carrying a child in a cradle upon her back.

SECT. III.  
Deification  
of the sun  
and moon.

*Tonatricli* and *Meztli*, names of the sun and moon, both deified by these nations. They said, that after the recovery and multiplication of mankind, each of the above mentioned heroes or demigods, had among the men, his servants and adherents : and that there being no sun, the one that had been, having come to an end, the heroes assembled in *Teotihuacan* around a great fire, and said to the men that the  
first

first of them that should throw himself into the fire would have the glory to become a sun. Forthwith one of the men, more intrepid than the rest, called *Nanabuahtin*, threw himself into the flames, and descended to hell. In the interval while they all remained expecting the event, the heroes made wagers with the quails, locusts, and other animals, about the place of the sky where the sun would first appear; and the animals being mistaken in their conjectures were immediately sacrificed. At length the sun arose in that quarter which from that time forward has been called the *Levant*; but he had scarcely risen above the horizon when he stopped; which the heroes perceiving, sent to desire him to continue his course. The sun replied, that he would not, until he should see them all put to death. The heroes were no less enraged than terrified by that answer: upon which one of them named *Citli*, taking his bow and three arrows, shot one at the sun; but the sun saved himself by stooping. *Citli* aimed two other arrows, but in vain. The sun enraged turned back the last arrow, and fixed it in the forehead of *Citli*, who instantly expired. The rest intimidated by the fate of their brother, and unable to cope with the sun, resolved to die by the hands of *Xolotl*, who after killing all his brothers, put an end to his own life. The heroes before they died left their cloaths to their servants; and since the conquest of these countries by the Spaniards, certain ancient garments have been found, which were preserved by the Indians with extraordinary veneration, under a belief that they had them by inheritance from those ancient heroes. The men were affected with great melancholy upon losing their masters; but *Texcatlipoca* commanded one of them to go to the house of the sun, and from thence to bring music to celebrate his festival: he told him that for his journey which was to be by sea, he would prepare a bridge of whales and tortoises, and desired him to sing always as he went, a song which he gave him. This the Mexicans said, was the origin of the music and dancing with which they celebrated the festivals of their gods. They ascribed the daily sacrifice which they made of quails to the sun, to that which the heroes made of those birds; and the barbarous sacrifices of human victims, so common afterwards in these countries, they ascribed to the example of *Xolotl* with his brethren.

They



BOOK VI. They told a similar fable of the origin of the moon. *Texcociztecal*, another of those men who assembled in *Teotihuacan*, following the example of *Nanahuatzin*, threw himself into the fire: but the flames being somewhat less fierce, he turned out less bright, and was transformed into the moon. To these two deities they consecrated those two famous temples erected in the plain of *Teotihuacan*, of which we shall give an account in another place.

SECT. IV.  
The god of  
air.

*Quetzalcoatl*. (Feathered serpent.) This was among the Mexicans, and all the other nations of *Anahuac*, the god of the air. He was said to have once been high-priest of *Tula*. They figured him tall, big, and of a fair complexion, with an open forehead, large eyes, long black hair, and a thick beard. From a love of decency, he wore always a long robe; he was so rich that he had palaces of silver and precious stones; he was thought to possess the greatest industry, and to have invented the art of melting metals and cutting gems. He was supposed to have had the most profound wisdom, which he displayed in the laws which he left to mankind; and above all to have had the most rigid and exemplary manners. Whenever he intended to promulgate a law in his kingdom, he ordered a crier to the top of the mountain *Tzatzitepec* (the hill of shouting) near the city of *Tula*, whose voice was heard at the distance of three hundred miles. In his time, the corn grew so strong that a single ear was a load for a man: gourds were as long as a man's body: it was unnecessary to dye cotton, for it grew naturally of all colours: and all other fruits and seeds were in the same abundance and of extraordinary size. Then too there was an incredible number of beautiful and sweet singing birds. All his subjects were rich, and to sum up all in one word, the Mexicans imagined as much happiness under the priesthood of *Quetzalcoatl*, as the Greeks did under the reign of Saturn, whom this Mexican god likewise resembled in the exile which he suffered. Amidst all this prosperity, *Texcatlipoca*, I know not for what reason, wishing to drive him from that country, appeared to him in the form of an old man, and told him that it was the will of the gods that he should be taken to the kingdom of *Tlapalla*. At the same time he offered him a beverage, which *Quetzalcoatl* readily accepted, in hopes of obtaining that immortality after which he aspired. He had no sooner drank it than he felt him-  
self

self so strongly inclined to go to *Tlapalla*, that he set out immediately, accompanied by many of his subjects, who, on the way, entertained him with music. Near the city of *Quaubtitlan* he felled a tree with stones, which remained fixed in the trunk; and near *Tlalnepantla* he laid his hand upon a stone and left an impression, which the Mexicans shewed the Spaniards after the conquest. Upon his arrival at *Cholula*, the citizens detained him, and made him take upon him the government of their city. Besides the decency and sweetness of his manners, the aversion he shewed to all kinds of cruelty, insomuch that he could not bear to hear the very mention of war, added much to the affection entertained for him by the inhabitants of Cholula. To him they said they owed their knowledge of melting metals, their laws by which they were ever afterwards governed, the rites and ceremonies of their religion, and even, as some affirmed, the arrangement of their seasons and calendar.

After being twenty years in *Cholula*, he resolved to pursue his journey to the imaginary kingdom of *Tlapalla*, carrying along with him four noble and virtuous youths. In the maritime province of *Coatzacoalco*, he dismissed them, and desired them to assure the *Cholulans* that he would return to comfort and direct them. The *Cholulans* out of respect to their beloved *Quetzalcoatl*, put the reins of government into the hands of those young men. Some people said that he suddenly disappeared, others that he died upon that coast; but, however it might be, *Quetzalcoatl* was consecrated as a god by the *Toltecas* of *Cholulan*, and made chief guardian of their city, in the center of which, in honour of him, they raised a great eminence and built a sanctuary upon it. Another eminence with a temple, was afterwards erected to him in *Tula*. From Cholula his worship was propagated over all that country, where he was adored as the god of the air. He had temples in Mexico, and elsewhere; and some nations, even enemies of the *Cholulans*, had, in the city of Cholula, temples and priests dedicated to his worship; and people came from all countries thither, to pay their devotions and to fulfil their vows. The *Cholulans* preserved with the highest veneration some small green stones, very well cut, which they said had belonged to him. The people of Yucatan boasted that their nobles were descended from him.



BOOK IV. Barren women offered up their prayers to him in order to become fruitful. His festivals were great and extraordinary, especially in Cholula, in the *Teoxibuitl*, or divine year; and were preceded by a severe fast of eighty days, and by dreadful austerities practised by the priests consecrated to his worship. Quetzalcoatl, they said, cleared the way for the god of water; because in these countries rain is generally preceded by wind.

Dr. Sigüenza imagined that the *Quetzalcoatl*, deified by those people, was no other than the apostle St. Thomas, who announced to them the Gospel. He supported that opinion with great learning, in a work (*b*), which, with many other of his inestimable writings, has been unfortunately lost by the neglect of his heirs. In that work he instituted a comparison betwixt the names of *Didymos* and *Quetzalcoatl* (*i*), their dress, their doctrine, and their prophecies; and examined the places through which they went, the traces which they left, and the miracles which their respective disciples related. As we have never seen the manuscript above mentioned, we shall avoid criticising an opinion to which we cannot subscribe, notwithstanding the respect which we bear for the great genius and extensive learning of the author.

Some Mexican writers are persuaded that the Gospel had been preached in America some centuries before the arrival of the Spaniards. The grounds of that opinion are some crosses (*k*) which have been found

(*b*) This work of Sigüenza is mentioned by Betancourt, in his *Mexican Theatre*; and by Dr. Eguiera, in his *Mexican Bibliotheca*.

(*i*) Betancourt observes, when he is comparing together the names of *Didymos* and *Quetzalcoatl*, that the latter is composed of *Coatl* a twin, and *Quetzalli* a gem; and that it signifies a Precious Twin. But Torquemada, who perfectly understood the Mexican language, and had those names interpreted to him by the ancient people, says that *Quetzalcoatl* means, serpent furnished with feathers. In fact, *Coatl* does perfectly signify *serpent*, and *Quetzalli*, *green-feather*, and have been applied to *twin* and *gem*, only metaphorically.

(*k*) The crosses the most celebrated are those of Yucatan, of Mizteca, Queretaro, Tepique, and Tianquiztepec. Those of Yucatan are mentioned by Father Cogolludo, a Franciscan, in his History, book ii. chap 12. The cross of Mizteca is taken notice of by Boturini in his work, and in the chronicle of Father Burgoa, a Dominican. There is an account of the cross of Queretaro, written by a Franciscan of the college of *Propaganda* in that city; and of that of Tepique by the learned Jesuit Sigismund Tarabal, whose manuscripts are preserved in the Jesuit college of Guadalajara. That of Tianquiztepec was discovered by Boturini, and is mentioned in his work. The crosses of Yucatan were worshipped by the Yucatanese, in obedience, as they said, to the instructions of their great prophet *Chilam-Cambal*, who desired that when a certain race of men with beards should arrive in that country from the East, and should

found at different times, which seem to have been made before the arrival of the Spaniards: the fast of forty days observed by the people of the new world (*l*), the tradition of the future arrival of a strange people, with beards, and the prints of human feet impressed upon some stones, which are supposed to be the footsteps of the apostle St. Thomas (*n*). We never could reconcile ourselves to this opinion; but the examination of such monuments and remains, would require a work of a very different kind from that which we have undertaken.

*Tlaloc*, otherwise *Tlalocateuētlī* (master of paradise), was the god of water. They called him fertilizer of the earth, and protector of their temporal goods. They believed he resided upon the highest mountains, where the clouds are generally formed, such as those of *Tlaloc*, *Tlascala*, and *Toluca*; whither they often went to implore his protection.

The native historians relate, that the *Acolhuas* having arrived in that country in the time of *Xolotl*, the first Chechemecan king, found at the top of the mountain of *Tlaloc*, an image of that god, made of a white and very light stone, in the shape of a man sitting upon a square stone, with a vessel before him, in which was some elastic gum, and a variety of seeds. This was their yearly offering, by way of rendering up their thanks after having had a favourable harvest. That image was reckoned the oldest in that country; for it had been placed upon that hill by the ancient *Toltecas*, and remained till the end of the XVth or beginning of the XVIth century, when *Nezahualpilli*, king of *Acolhuacan*, in order to gain the favour of his subjects, carried it away, and placed another in its stead, of a very hard black stone. The new image, however, being defaced by lightning, and the priests declaring it to be a punishment from heaven, the ancient statue was restored, and there

SECT. V.  
The gods of  
mountains,  
water, fire,  
earth, night,  
and hell.

should be seen to adore that sign, they should embrace the doctrine of those strangers. We shall have an opportunity of speaking more particularly concerning these monuments, in the *Ecclesiastical History of Mexico*, if Heaven vouchsafe to favour our design.

(*l*) The fast of forty days proves nothing, as those nations likewise observed fasts of three, four, five, twenty, eighty, a hundred and sixty days, and even of four years; nor was that of forty days, by any means the most common.

(*n*) Not only the marks of human feet have been found printed or rather cut out in stones, but those likewise of animals have been found, without our being able to form any conjecture of the purpose had in view by those who have taken the trouble to cut them.



BOOK VI. continued to be preserved and worshipped, until the promulgation of the Gospel, when it was thrown down and broken by the order of the first bishop of Mexico.

The ancients also believed that in all the high mountains there resided other gods, subaltern to Tlaloc. They all went under the same name, and were revered, not only as gods of water, but also as the gods of mountains. The image of *Tlaloc* was painted blue and green, to express the different colours that are observed in water. He held in his hand a rod of gold, of an undulated and pointed form, by which they intended to denote the lightning. He had a temple in Mexico, within the inclosure of the greater temple, and the Mexicans celebrated several festivals in honour to him every year.

Chalchiuhcueje, otherwise *Chalchibuitlicue*, the goddess of water, and companion of Tlaloc. She was known by some other very expressive names (*o*), which either signify the effects which water produces, or the different appearances and colours which it assumes in motion. The Tlascalans called her *Matlalcueje*, that is, clothed in a green robe; and they gave the same name to the highest mountain of Tlascala, on whose summit are formed those stormy clouds which generally burst over the city of Angelopoli. To that summit the Tlascalans ascended to perform their sacrifices, and offer up their prayers. This is the very same goddess of water, to which Torquemada gives the name of *Xochiquetzal*, and the Cav. Boturini that of *Macuilxochiquetzalli*.

Xiuhtecuſtli (master of the year and of the grains), was among these nations the god of fire, to whom they likewise gave the name of *Ixcouzaubqui*, which expresses the colour of fire. This god was greatly revered in the Mexican empire. At their dinner they made an offering to him of the first morsel of their food, and the first draught of their beverage, by throwing both into the fire; and burned incense to him at certain times of the day. In honour of him they held two fixed festivals of the most solemn kind, one in the tenth, and another in the eighteenth month; and one moveable feast at which they created the

(*o*) *Apozonalloil* and *Acuecuejotl* express the swelling and fluctuation of water: *Atlacamani*, storms excited on it: *Abuic* and *Aiaub*, its motions sometimes to one side and sometimes to another: *Xixiquipilibui*, the alternate rising and falling of the waves, &c.

usual magistrates, and renewed the ceremony of the investiture of the fiefs of the kingdom. He had a temple in Mexico, and some other palaces.

Centeotl, goddess of the earth and of corn, called likewise, *Tona-cajobua* (*p*), that is, she who supports us. She had five temples in Mexico, and three festivals were held on her account, in the third, eighth, and eleventh months: she was particularly revered and honoured by the Totonacas, who esteemed her to be their chief protectress; and erected to her, upon the top of a high mountain, a temple, where she was served by a great number of priests solely devoted to her worship, and adored by the whole nation. They had an extraordinary love for her, being persuaded that she did not require human victims, but was contented with the sacrifice of doves, quails, leverets, and such animals, which they offered up to her in great numbers. They expected she was at last to deliver them from the cruel slavery they were under to the other gods, who constrained them to sacrifice so many human creatures. The Mexicans entertained very different sentiments of her shedding a great deal of human blood at her festivals. In the above mentioned temple of the Totonacas, was one of the most renowned oracles of the country.

Mictlanteuctli, the god of hell, and *Mictlancibuatl* his female companion, were much honoured by the Mexicans. These deities were imagined to dwell in a place of great darkness in the bowels of the earth. They had a temple in Mexico, in which they held a festival in the eighteenth month. Sacrifices and offerings were made to them by night, and the chief minister of their worship was a priest called *Tlil-lantlenamacac*, who was always died of a black colour, in order to perform the functions of his priesthood.

Joalteuctli, the god of night, who seems to us to have been the same with *Mextli* or the moon. Some think him the same with *Tona-tiuh*, or the sun, while others imagine him to have been quite a distinct deity. They recommended their children to this god, to give them sleep.

(*p*) They gave her likewise the names of *Tzinteotl* (original goddess), *Xilonen*, *Iztaccacuateotl* and *Tlatlaubquicenteotl*, changing her name according to the different states of the grain in the progress of its growth.



## BOOK VI.

Joalticiti (nightly physician), goddesses of cradles; to whom they likewise recommended their children to be taken care of, particularly in the night time.

SECT. VI.  
The gods  
of war.

Huitzilopochtli, or Mexitli, was the god of war; the deity the most honoured by the Mexicans, and their chief protector (*q*). Of this god some said he was a pure spirit, others that he was born of a woman, but without the assistance of a man, and described his birth in the following manner. There lived, said they, in Coatepec, a place near to the ancient city of Tula, a woman called *Coatlicue*, mother of the *Centzonhuiznabuis*, who was extremely devoted to the worship of the gods. One day as she was employed, according to her usual custom, in walking in the temple, she beheld descending in the air, a ball made of various feathers. She seized it and kept it in her bosom, intending afterwards to employ the feathers in decoration of the altar; but when she wanted it after her walk was at an end, she could not find it, at which she was extremely surprised, and her wonder was very greatly increased when she began to perceive from that moment that she was pregnant. Her pregnancy advanced till it was discovered by her children, who, although they could not themselves suspect their mother's virtue, yet fearing the disgrace she would suffer upon her delivery, determined to prevent it by putting her to death. They could not take their resolution so secretly as to conceal it from their mother, who while she was in deep affliction at the thoughts of dying by the hands of her own children, heard an unexpected voice issue from her womb, saying, "Be not afraid mother, for I shall save you with the greatest honour to yourself, and glory to me." Her hard-hearted sons, guided and encouraged by their sister *Cojolxauhqui*, who had been the most keenly bent upon the deed, were now just upon the point of executing their purpose, when Huitzilopochtli was born, with a shield in his

(*q*) *Huitzilopochtli* is a compound of two words, viz. *Huitzilin*, the humming bird, and *Opoctli*, left. It was so called from his image having the feathers of the little bird upon its left foot. Boturini knowing little of the Mexican language, derives the name from *Huitziton* the leader of the Mexicans in their pilgrimage, and takes this leader and the god to have been the same person. Besides that such an etymology is over-strained, that pretended identity is quite unknown to the Mexicans themselves, who when they began their pilgrimage under the conduct of Huitziton, had long before, from time immemorial, worshipped the god of war: the Spaniards being unable to pronounce the word, called him *Huiebilobos*.

left

left hand, a spear in his right, and a crest of green feathers on his head; his left leg adorned with feathers, and his face, arms, and thighs streaked with blue lines. As soon as he came into the world he displayed a twisted pine, and commanded one of his soldiers, called *Tochancalqui*, to fell with it *Cojolxauhqui*, as the one who had been the most guilty; and he himself attacked the rest with so much fury that, in spite of their efforts, their arms, or their intreaties, he killed them all, plundered their houses, and presented the spoils to his mother. Mankind were so terrified by this event, that from that time they called him *Tetzabuitl*, terror, and *Tetzauhteotl*, terrible god.

This was the god who, as they said, becoming the protector of the Mexicans, conducted them for so many years in their pilgrimage, and at length settled them where they afterwards founded the great city of Mexico. There they raised to him that superb temple so much celebrated even by the Spaniards, in which were annually holden three solemn festivals in the fifth, ninth, and fifteenth months; besides those kept every four years, every thirteen years, and at the beginning of every century. His statue was of gigantic size, in the posture of a man seated on a blue-coloured bench, from the four corners of which issued four huge snakes. His forehead was blue, but his face was covered with a golden mask, while another of the same kind covered the back of his head. Upon his head he carried a beautiful crest, shaped like the beak of a bird; upon his neck a collar consisting of ten figures of the human heart; in his right hand, a large, blue, twisted club; in his left, a shield, on which appeared five balls of feathers disposed in the form of a cross, and from the upper part of the shield rose a golden flag with four arrows, which the Mexicans pretended to have been sent to them from heaven to perform those glorious actions which we have seen in their history. His body was girt with a large golden snake, and adorned with various lesser figures of animals made of gold and precious stones, which ornaments and insignia had each their peculiar meaning. They never deliberated upon making war without imploring the protection of this god, with prayers and sacrifices; and offered up a greater number of human victims to him than to any other of the gods.

Tlaca-



## BOOK VI.

Tlacahuepancuexcotzin, likewise a god of war, the younger brother and companion of Huitzilopochtli. His image was worshipped along with his brother's, in the chief sanctuary of Mexico; but no where with greater devotion than at the court of Tezcuco.

Painalton (swift or hurried), a god of war, and lieutenant of Huitzilopochtli. As they invoked the latter in those wars which were undertaken after serious deliberation, so they called upon Painalton upon sudden occasions, such as an unexpected attack of the enemy. Then the priests ran about the city with the image of the god, which was worshipped together with those of the other gods of war, calling upon him with loud cries, and making sacrifices to him of quails, and other animals. All the men of war were then obliged to run to arms.

SECT. VII.  
The gods of  
commerce,  
hunting, fish-  
ing, &c.

Jacateuctli (the lord who guides), the god of commerce (*r*), for whom the merchants celebrated two great annual festivals in his temple at Mexico; one in the ninth, and another in the seventeenth month, with many sacrifices of human victims, and superb repasts.

Mixcoatl, the goddess of hunting, and the principal deity of the Otomies, who, living among the mountains, were for the most part hunters. The Matlatzincas likewise worshipped her with peculiar reverence. She had two temples in Mexico, and in one of them called *Teotlalpan*, was held a great festival with numerous sacrifices of the wild animals, in the fourteenth month.

Opochtli, the god of fishing. He was believed to be the inventor of nets and other instruments of fishing, whence he was particularly revered by fishermen, as their protector. In Cuitlahuac, a city upon a little island in the lake of Chalco, there was a god of fishing highly honoured, named *Amimitl*, who probably differed from Opochtli no otherwise than in name.

Huixtocihuatl, the goddess of salt, was worshipped by the Mexicans upon account of the salt works which they had at a little distance from the capital. A feast was celebrated to her in the seventh month.

Tzapotlatenan, the goddess of physic. She was supposed to have been the inventress of the oil called *Oxitl*, and other most useful drugs. She was yearly honoured with the sacrifice of human victims, and with particular hymns composed in her praise.

(*r*) Jacateuctli was also called *Xiacateuctli* and *Jacacoluahqui*.

Tezcat-

Texcatzoncatl, the god of wine; known likewise by other names (*s*), from the effects produced by wine. He had a temple in Mexico, in which four hundred priests were consecrated to his worship, and where for him, and the other gods his companions, a yearly feast was held in the thirteenth month.

Ixtlilton (the black-faced) seems to have been a god of physic; for they used to bring sick children to his temple, to be cured. Their fathers brought them, and dictating to them the prayers with which they were to ask for health, made them dance before the image; and then gave them a water to drink which had been blessed by the priests consecrated to the god.

Coatlícue, or *Coatlantona*, was the goddess of flowers. She had a temple in Mexico called *Jopico*, where a festival was celebrated to her by the *Xochimanqui*, or composers of nosegays of flowers, in the third month which falls in spring. They presented her among other things with beautiful braids of flowers. We do not know whether this goddess was the same with the mother of Huitzilopochtli.

Tlazolteotl was the god whom the Mexicans invoked to obtain pardon of their sins, and to be freed from the disgrace to which the guilty are exposed. The principal devotees of this false deity were lustful men, who courted his protection with sacrifices and with offerings (*t*).

Xipe is the name given by historians to the god of the goldsmiths, (*u*) who was greatly revered among the Mexicans. They were persuaded that all those who neglected his worship, would be punished with diseases, particularly with the itch, boils, and severe pains in the eyes and the head. They took care, therefore, to distinguish themselves by the cruelty of their sacrifices, which were made at a festival usually celebrated in the second month.

Nappateuctli (four times lord) was the god of the mat-weavers. He was said to be a benign god, easy to pardon injuries, and generous

(*s*) Such as *Téquebmecaniani* the strangler, and *Teatlabuiani* the drowner.

(*t*) Boturini asserts, that Tlazolteotl was the immodest and Hebeian goddess; and *Macuil-xochiquetzalli*, the Venus *Pronuba*. But the Mexicans never attributed to their gods those shameful irregularities, which the Greeks and Romans imputed to theirs.

(*u*) *Xipe* has no meaning; so that I imagine the Spanish writers not knowing the Mexican name of this god, applied to him the two first syllables of the name of his feast *Xipebualitzli*.



BOOK VI. towards all. He had two temples in Mexico, where a festival was held in the thirteenth month.

Omacatl was the god of mirth. Upon occasion of any public rejoicing, or any great feast of the Mexican lords, they imagined they would certainly meet with some disaster if they neglected to bring the image of this god from the temple and set it up at the feast.

Tonantzin (our mother) I take to be the same with the goddess Centeotl, whom we have mentioned before. She had a temple upon a mountain, about three miles from Mexico towards the north, whither the nations came in crowds to worship her, with a wonderful number of sacrifices. At the foot of that hill is now the most famous sanctuary in the new world, dedicated to the true God; where people from the most remote countries assemble to worship the celebrated and truly miraculous image of the most Holy Lady of *Guadaloupe*; thus converting a place of abomination into a mercy-seat, where religion has distributed its favours, for the benefit of those nations, in the place that has been stained with the blood of so many of their ancestors.

Teteoinan was the mother of the gods, which the word itself signifies. As the Mexicans called themselves the children of the gods, they gave to this goddess the name likewise of *Tocitzin*, that is, our grand-mother. I have already spoken of the origin and deification of this pretended mother of the gods in the second book, where I gave an account of the tragical death of the princess of Colhuacan. This goddess had a temple in Mexico, where a most solemn feast was held in the eleventh month. She was particularly adored by the Tlascalans; and midwives worshipped her as their protectress. Almost all the Spanish writers confound her with Tonantzin, but they are certainly different.

Ilamateuctli, for whom the Mexicans had a feast upon the third day of the seventeenth month, seems to have been the goddess of age. Her name means nothing more than Old Lady.

Tepitoton (little ones), was the name given by the Mexicans to their penates, or household gods, and the images that represented them. Of these little images, the kings and great lords had always six in their houses, the nobles four, and the lower people two. They were to be seen every where in the public streets.

Besides

Besides these gods which were the most considerable, and some others which we omit, that we may not tire the reader, there were two hundred and sixty, to which as many days were consecrated. Those days take their names from them, and are those we find in the first thirteen months of their calendar.

The Mexican gods were generally the same with those of the other nations of Anahuac; differing only in their greater or less celebrity, in some of their rites, and sometimes in their names. The god the most celebrated in Mexico was *Huitzilopochtli*; in Cholula and Huexotzinco, *Quetzalcoatl*; among the Totonacas, *Centeotl*; and among the Otomies, *Mixcoatl*. The Tlascalans, although the constant enemies of the Mexicans, adored the same gods; and even their most favoured deity was the very Huitzilopochtli of the Mexicans, but under the name of *Camaxtle*. The people of Tezcuco, as allies, friends, and neighbours, conformed almost entirely with the Mexicans.

The number of the images by which those false gods were represented, and worshipped in the temples, the houses, the streets, and the woods, were infinite. Zumarraga, first bishop of Mexico, affirms, that the Franciscans had, in the course of eight years, broken more than twenty thousand idols; but that number is trifling compared to those of the capital only. They were generally made of clay, and certain kinds of stone and wood; but sometimes too of gold and other metals: and there were some of gems. In a high mountain of Achiauhtla, in Mizteca, Benedict Fernandez, a celebrated Dominican missionary, found a little idol called by the Miztecas the *heart of the people*. It was a very precious emerald, four inches long and two inches broad, upon which was engraved the figure of a bird, and round it that of a little snake. The Spaniards offered fifteen hundred sequins for it; but the zealous missionary before all the people, and with great solemnity reduced it to powder. The most extraordinary idol of the Mexicans was that of Huitzilopochtli, which was made of certain seeds pasted together with human blood. Almost all their idols were coarse and hideous from the fantastical parts of which they were composed in order to represent their attributes and employments.

The divinity of those false gods were acknowledged by prayers, kneeling and prostrations, with vows, fasts, and other austerities,

SECT. VIII.  
Their idols  
and the man-  
ner of wor-  
shipping their  
gods.



BOOK VI. with sacrifices and offerings, and various rites, some common to other nations, and others peculiar to the Mexican religion alone. They prayed generally upon their knees, with their faces turned towards the east, and therefore made their sanctuaries with the door to the west. They made vows for their children as well as for themselves, and frequently dedicated them to the service of their gods in some temple or monastery. Those who happened to be in danger from stumbling or slipping, upon a journey, made vows to visit the temple of the god Omacatl, and to offer up incense and paper. They made frequent use of the name of God to confirm the truth; and their oaths were in this form; *Cuix à mo nechitta in Toteotzin?* Does not our god see me now? Then naming the principal god, or any other they particularly revered, they kissed their hand, after having touched the earth with it. Great faith was put in oaths of this kind by way of purgation when any one was accused of a crime; for they thought no man could be so rash as to venture to abuse the name of God, at the evident risk of being most severely punished by heaven.

SECT. IX.  
Their transformations.

Metamorphoses, or transformations, were not wanting to the mythology of the Mexicans. Among others they related one of a man named *Jappan*, who having undertaken to do penance upon a mountain, yielded to the temptations of a woman, and fell into the sin of adultery. He was immediately beheaded by *Jaotl*, to whom the gods had given the charge of watching over his conduct, and by the gods themselves was transformed into a black scorpion. *Jaotl*, not satisfied with that punishment, executed it likewise upon *Tlabuitzin*, the wife of *Jappan*, who was transformed into a white scorpion, while *Jaotl* himself, for having exceeded the bounds of his commission, was turned into a locust. They said it was from the shame of that crime that scorpions shun the light, and hide themselves under stones.

SECT. X.  
The greater temple of Mexico.

The Mexicans, and other nations of Anahuac, like all civilized nations, had temples or places allotted for the purposes of religion, where the people assembled to worship their gods, and implore their protection. They called the temple *Teocalli*, that is, the house of god, and *Teopan*, the place of God; which names they applied with greater propriety to the temples erected in honour of the true God, after they embraced Christianity.

The

The city and kingdom of Mexico began with the building of the sanctuary of Huitzilopochtli or *Mexitli*, whence it has derived its name. That edifice was then a miserable hut. Itzcoatl, the first king and conqueror of that nation, after the taking of Azcapozalco, enlarged it. Montezuma I. his successor, built a new temple, which had some shew of magnificence; and, at length Ahuitzotl raised and dedicated that immense temple which his predecessor Tizoc had planned. This was the temple which the Spaniards celebrated so highly after they had destroyed it. It were to be wished that their accuracy in describing its dimensions had been but equal to their zeal in destroying that superb monument of superstition: but such is the variety of their accounts, that, after having laboured to reconcile them, I have found it impossible to ascertain its proportions; nor should I ever have been able to form an idea of the architecture of that temple without the figure presented to us by the Anonymous Conqueror; a copy of which I have here subjoined, although I have paid less regard in it to his delineation than his description. I shall mention therefore all that I think may be depended upon, after a very tedious comparison of the descriptions given by four eye-witnesses, and neglect what I have been unable to extricate from the confusion of different authors (x).

(x) The four eye-witnesses whose descriptions we have connected together are the conqueror Cortes, Bernal Diaz, the Anonymous Conqueror, and Sahagun. The three first lived for several months in the palace of king Axajacatl, near the temple, and therefore saw it every day. Sahagun, although he never saw it entire, yet saw some part of it, and could discover what ground it had occupied. Gomara, who did not himself see the temple, nor ever was in Mexico, received the different accounts of it from the conquerors themselves who saw it. Acosta, whose description has been copied by Herrera and Solis, instead of the great temple describes one perfectly different. This author, although in other respects deserving of credit, was not in Mexico till sixty years after the conquest, when there were no remains of the temple.

In a Dutch edition of Solis, was given an incorrect print of the great temple, which was afterwards given by the authors of the *General History of Voyages*, and is still to be met with in an edition of the conqueror Cortes's Letters, published at Mexico in 1770: but the carelessness of the editors of that edition will appear from comparing the print in it with Cortes's own description. He says, in his first letter, though somewhat hyperbolically, that the great temple of Mexico was higher than the tower of the cathedral church of Seville, while in the print mentioned it scarcely appears to be seven or eight perches or toises. Cortes declares that five hundred Mexican nobles fortified themselves in the upper area, whereas that space as represented in the print could not contain more than seventy or eighty men. Lastly, omitting many other contradictions, Cortes says, that the temple consisted of three or four bodies, and that each body had, as he describes it, its corridors or balconies; yet in the print it is represented as consisting of one body only, without any of those corridors at all.

This



## BOOK VI.

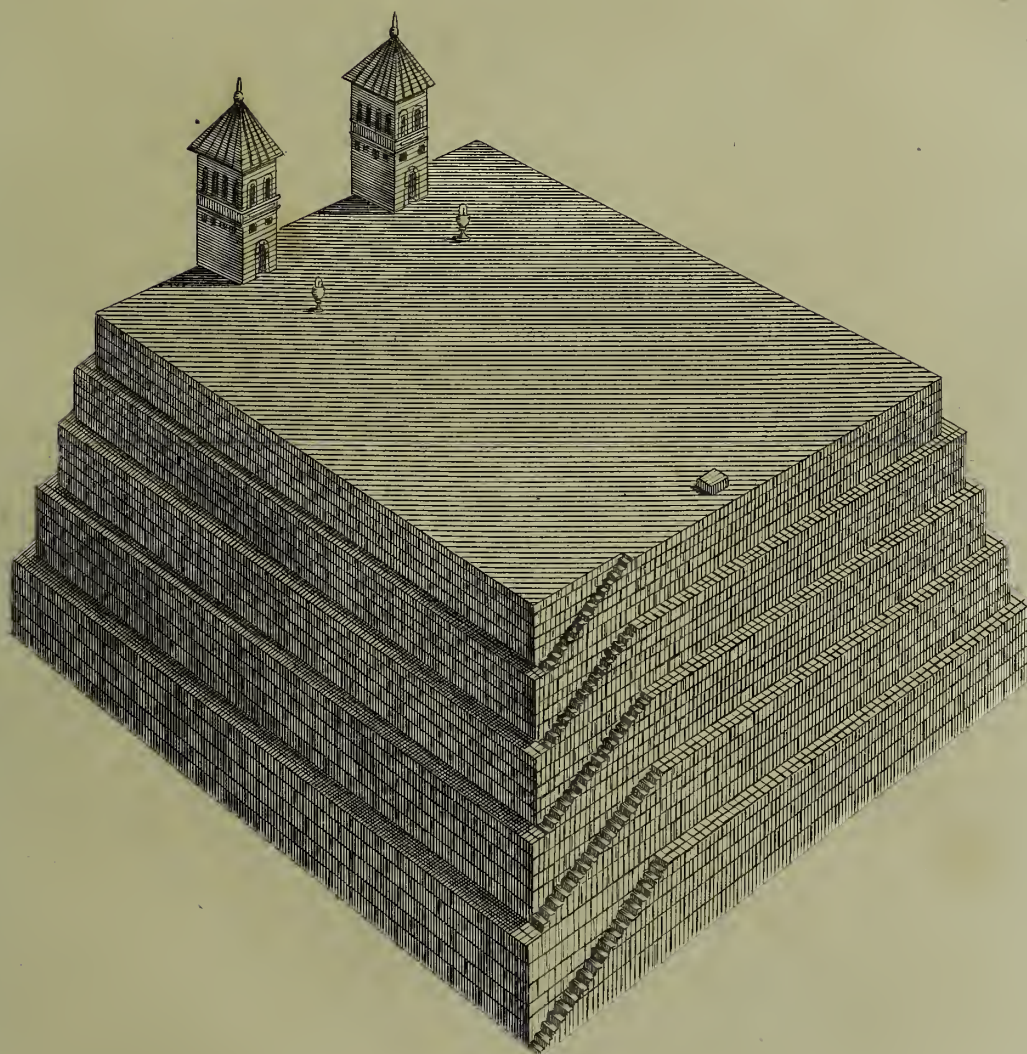
This great temple occupied the centre of the city, and, together with the other temples and buildings annexed to it, comprehended all that space upon which the great cathedral church now stands, part of the greater market-place, and part likewise of the streets and buildings around. Within the inclosure of the wall which encompassed it in a square form, the conqueror Cortes affirms that a town of five hundred houses might have stood (*y*). The wall, built of stone and lime, was very thick, eight feet high, crowned with battlements, in the form of niches, and ornamented with many stone figures in the shape of serpents, whence it obtained the name of *Coatepanthi*, or the wall of serpents. It had four gates to the four cardinal points: the eastern gate looked to a broad street which led to the lake of Tezcuco: the rest corresponded to the three principal streets of the city, the broadest and the straightest, which formed a continuation with those built upon the lake that led to Iztapalapan, to Tacuba, and to Tepejacac. Over each of the four gates was an arsenal filled with a vast quantity of offensive and defensive weapons, where the troops went when it was necessary, to be supplied with arms. The space within the walls was curiously paved with such smooth and polished stones that the horses of the Spaniards could not move upon them without slipping and tumbling down. In the middle was raised an immense solid building of greater length than breadth (*z*), covered with square equal pieces of pavement. The building consisted of five bodies nearly equal in height, but differing in length and breadth; the highest being narrowest. The first body, or basis of the building, was more than fifty perches long from east to west, and about forty-three in breadth, from north to south (*a*). The second

(*y*) The Anonymous Conqueror says, that what was within the wall was like a city. Gomara affirms, that the wall was a very long bowshot in length upon every side. Torquemada, although agreeing with Gomara in book viii. chap. 2. says afterwards in ch. xix. that the circumference of the wall was above three thousand paces, which is plainly a mistake. Dr. Hernandez, in his prolix description of the temple, preserved in manuscript in the library of the Escorial, and which Father Nieremberg has made use of in his Natural History, allows to the wall, of every side, two hundred Toledan cubits, which is about eighty-six perches.

(*z*) Sahagun makes the temple perfectly square, but the Anonymous Conqueror, both in the description and in the figure which he has left us, represents it to have been of greater length than breadth, like those of Teotihuacan which served as models for all the rest.

(*a*) Sahagun gives to the first body upon every side three hundred and sixty Toledan feet, and that is the measure of its length. Gomara gives it fifty *brazas*, which is the measure of its breadth. Three hundred and sixty Toledan feet make three hundred and eight Parisian, or  
a lit-

*The greater Temple of Mexico.*







second body was about a perch less in length and breadth than the first; the third as much less than the second; and the rest in proportion, so that upon each body there remained a free space or plain which would allow three, or even four men abreast to walk round the next body.

The stairs, which were upon the south-side, were made of large well formed stones, and consisted of a hundred and fourteen steps, each a foot high. They were not, however, one single stair-case continued all the way, as they have been represented by the authors of the General History of Travels, and the Publishers of Cortes's Letters, in Mexico; but were divided into as many separate stair-cases as there were bodies of the building in the manner shewn in our plate; so that after getting to the top of the first stair-case, one could not mount the second, without going along the first plain round the second; nor the third, without going along the second plain, and so of the rest. This will be better understood by consulting the plate, which is copied from that of the Anonymous Conqueror (*b*), but corrected as to the dimensions, from that author's own description, and other historians.

Upon the fifth body was a plain, which we shall call the upper area, which was about forty three perches long (*c*), and thirty-four broad, and was as well paved as the great area below. At the eastern extremity of this plain were raised two towers to the height of fifty-six feet, or nearly nine perches. Each was divided into three bodies, of which the lower was of stone and lime, and the other two of wood very well wrought and painted. The inferior body or basis of each were properly the sanctuaries, where, upon an altar of stone, five feet high, were placed their tutelary idols. One of these two sanctuaries was conse-

a little more than fifty perches. Fifty *bravas*, or *estados* make two hundred and fifty-seven Parisian feet, or about forty-two perches.

(*b*) A copy of the drawing of the temple made by the Anonymous Conqueror, is to be found in the collection of Jo. Ramusio; and another in Father Kircher's work, entitled, *Oedipus Ægyptiacus*.

(*c*) Sahagun, whose measures have been adopted by Torquemada, allows no more than seventy Toledan feet square, which is about ten perches, to the upper area; but it is impossible that five hundred Mexican nobles, as Cortes asserts, could have stood to fight against the Spaniards, in such a narrow space; especially if we believe Bernard Diaz, who says, that four thousand Mexicans fortified themselves in that temple, and that numbers had got up before the nobles ascended.

crated



BOOK IV. crated to Huitzilopochtli, and the gods of war ; and the other to Tezcatlipoca. The other bodies were destined to the keeping of some things belonging to the worship, and the ashes of some kings and lords who, through particular devotion, desired that to be done. The doors of both sanctuaries were towards the west, and both the towers terminated in a very beautiful wooden cupola. There is no author who has described the internal disposition and ornaments of the sanctuaries ; nor indeed the size of the towers ; so that what is represented in our plate is only delineated from conjecture. I believe, however, we may venture to say without danger of mistake, that the height of the building without the towers, was not less than nineteen perches, and with the towers exceeded twenty-eight. From that height one might see the lake, the cities around, and a great part of the valley ; and it has been affirmed by eye-witnesses to be the finest prospect in the world.

In the upper area was the altar for the common sacrifices, and in the lower that for the gladiatorial. Before the two sanctuaries were two stone stoves of the height of a man, and of the shape of our holy pyx, in which they preserved a constant fire, night and day, with the utmost care ; fearing that if ever it went out, they should suffer the most dreadful punishment from heaven. In the other temples and religious buildings comprised within the inclosure of the great wall, there were six hundred stoves, of the same size and figure, which in the night time, when they used all to be burning, presented a very pleasing sight.

SECT. XI.  
Buildings annexed to the great temple.

In the space betwixt the wall and the great temple, there were, besides a place for their religious dances, upwards of forty lesser temples, consecrated to the other gods, several colleges of priests, some seminaries for youth and children of both sexes, and many other buildings scattered about, of which, for their singularity, it will be necessary to give some account.

The most remarkable were the temples of Tezcatlipoca, Tlaloc, and Quetzalcoatl. They all resembled one another in form, but were of different sizes, and all fronted the great temple ; while the other temples without this area were built with the front towards the west. The temple of Quetzalcoatl alone differed from the rest in form ; it being round, the others all quadrangular. The door of this

this sanctuary was the mouth of an enormous serpent of stone, armed with fangs. Some Spaniards tempted by curiosity to go into that diabolical temple, afterwards confessed the horror which they felt upon entering it. Among other temples there was one called *Ilhuicatitlan*, dedicated to the planet Venus, in which was a great pillar with the figure of that star painted or engraved upon it; near which, at the time of her appearance, they sacrificed prisoners.

The colleges of priests, and the seminaries were various; but we particularly know only of five colleges or monasteries of priests, and three seminaries of youth, although there must certainly have been more, from the prodigious number of persons that were found there consecrated to the worship of the gods.

Among the remarkable buildings within this area, besides the four arsenals over the four gates, there was another near the temple *Texcalli* (house of mirrors), so called from its walls being covered with mirrors on the inside. There was another small temple called *Teccizcalli*, all adorned with shells which had a house annexed to it, into which, at certain times, the king of Mexico retired for the purposes of fasting and prayer. The high-priest had likewise a house of retirement called *Pojauhtlan*, and there were several others for other persons. There was also a great house of entertainment to accommodate strangers of distinction who came upon a devout visit to the temple, or from curiosity to see the grandeurs of the court. There were ponds in which the priests bathed; and fountains, the water of which they drank. In the pond called *Texcapan*, many bathed in obedience to a particular vow made to the gods. The water of one of the fountains called *Toxpalatl* was esteemed holy: it was drank only at the most solemn feasts, and no person was allowed to taste it at any other time (*d*). There were places allotted to the bringing up of birds for the sacrifices, gardens in which flowers and odoriferous herbs were raised for the decoration of the altars; and even a little wood in which were artificially

(*d*) The fountain *Toxpalatl*, the water of which was excellent, was stopped up, at the time when the Spaniards destroyed the temple; it was opened again in 1582, in the little square of the Marquis (which at present is called *el Empedradillo*), near to the cathedral; but for some reason or other, of which we are ignorant, it was a second time stopped up.



## BOOK VI.

represented hills, rocks, and precipices, and from which they issued to that general chace which we shall describe in another part of this work.

Particular apartments were destined for the keeping of the idols, the ornaments, and all the furniture of their temples ; and among them were three halls so large, that the Spaniards were astonished upon seeing them. Among the buildings most striking from their singularity, was a great prison like a cage, in which they kept the idols of the conquered nations as if imprisoned. In some other buildings of this kind they preserved the heads of those who had been sacrificed, some of which were nothing but heaps of bones piled upon one another. In others the heads were arranged in regular order upon poles, or fixed against the walls, forming, by the variety of their disposition, a spectacle not less curious than horrid. The greatest of these buildings called *Huitzompan*, although not within the great wall, was but a little way from it, over against the principal gate. This was a prodigious rampart of earth, longer than it was broad, in the form of a half pyramid. In the lowest part it was one hundred and fifty-four feet long. The ascent to the plain upon the top of it was by a stair-case of thirty steps. Upon that plain were erected about four feet asunder, more than seventy very long beams, bored from top to bottom. By these holes, sticks were passed across from one beam to another, and upon each of them a certain number of heads were strung by the temples. Upon the steps also of the stair-case there was a head betwixt every stone ; and at each end of the same edifice was a tower which appeared to have been made only of skulls and lime. As soon as a head began to crumble with age, the priests supplied its place with a fresh one from the bone-heaps in order to preserve the due number and arrangement. The skulls of ordinary victims were stripped of the scalp ; but those of men of rank, and great warriors, they endeavoured to preserve with the skin and beard and hair entire, which served only to render more frightful those trophies of their barbarous superstition. The number of heads preserved in this and such other buildings is so great, that some of the Spanish conquerors took the trouble of reckoning up those upon

upon the steps of this building, and upon the files betwixt the beams, and found them amount to one hundred thirty-six thousand (*e*). They who wish for a more minute detail of the buildings within the wall of the great temple, may read the relation of Sahagun in Torquemada, and the description of the seventy-eight edifices there by Dr. Hernandez, in the Natural History of Nieremberg.

BOOK VI.

Besides these temples there were others scattered in different quarters of the city. Some authors make the number of temples in that capital (comprehending, as may be imagined, even the smallest) amount to two thousand; and that of the towers to three hundred and sixty, but we do not know that any one ever actually counted them. There can be no doubt, however, that they were very numerous, and among them seven or eight distinguishable for their size; but that of Tlatelolco, consecrated likewise to Huitzilopochtli, rose above them all.

SECT. XII.  
Other temples.

Out of the capital, the most celebrated were those of Tezcucó, Cholula, and Teotihuacan. Bernal Diaz, who had the curiosity to number the steps of their stairs, says, that the temple of Tezcucó had one hundred and seventeen, and that of Cholula one hundred and twenty. We do not know whether that famous temple of Tezcucó was the same with Tezcutzinco, so celebrated by Valadès in his *Christian Rhetoric*, or the same with that renowned tower of nine bodies, erected by the king Nezahualcojotl, to the Creator of heaven. The great temple of Cholula, like many others of that city, was dedicated to their protector Quetzalcoatl. All the old historians speak with wonder of the number of the temples in Cholula. Cortes wrote to the emperor Charles V. that from the top of one temple he had counted more than four hundred towers of others (*f*). The lofty pyramid raised by the Toltecas remains to this day, in that place where there was

(*e*) Andrea de Tapia, an officer belonging to Cortes, and one of them who counted the skulls, gave this information to Gomara the historian, according to his own testimony in cap. lxxxii. of his History of Mexico.

(*f*) "Certifico a vuestra Alteza que yo contè desder una mezquita quatrocientas y tantas torres en la dicha ciudad (de Cholula) y todas son de mezquitas." Letter to Charles V. Oct. 30, 1520. The anonymous conqueror affirms, that he counted one hundred and ninety towers of the temples and palaces. Bernal Diaz says, that they exceeded a hundred; but it is probable, that the two authors counted those only which were remarkable for their height. Some later authors have said that these towers were as many in number as the days of the year.



BOOK VI. formerly a temple consecrated to that false deity, and now a holy sanctuary of the mother of the true God; but the pyramid from its great antiquity is so covered with earth and bushes, that it seems more like a natural eminence than an edifice. We are ignorant, indeed, of its dimensions, but its circumference in the lower part is not less than half a mile (*g.*) One may ascend to the top by a path made in a spiral direction round the pyramid, and I went up on horseback in 1744. This is that famous hill about which so many fables have been feigned, and which Boturini believed to have been raised by the Toltecas as a place of refuge in the event of another deluge like Noah's.

The famous edifices of Teotihuacan, about three miles south from that place, and more than twenty from Mexico, towards Greco, still subsist: those immense buildings which served as a model for the temples of that country, were two temples consecrated the one to the sun and the other to the moon, represented by two idols of monstrous bulk, made of stone and covered with gold. That of the sun had a great concavity in the breast, and an image of that planet of the purest gold fixed in it. The conquerors possessed themselves of the gold, the idols were broken by order of the first bishop of Mexico, and the fragments remained in that place till the end of the last century, and may, perhaps be there still. The base, or inferior body of the temple of the sun, is twenty-eight perches long, and eighty-six broad, and the height of the whole building is in proportion (*b*). That of the moon is eighty-six perches long in the base, and sixty-three broad. Each of these temples is divided into four bodies, and as many stair-cases, which are arranged in the same manner with those of the great temple of Mexico; but cannot now be traced, partly from their ruinous condition, and partly from the great quantity of earth with which they are every where covered. Round these edifices are scattered several little hills, which are supposed to have been as many lesser temples, dedicated to the other

(*g*) Betancourt says, that the height of the pyramid of Cholula was upwards of forty *estados*, that is, more than two hundred and five Parisian feet; but this author has been too sparing in his measure, as that height unquestionable exceeds five hundred feet.

(*b*) Gemelli measured the length and breadth of those temples, but had no instrument to measure their height. Cav. Boturini measured their height, but when he wrote his work he had not the measure by him, yet he thinks he found the temple of the sun to have been two hundred Castilian cubits high, that is, eighty-six perches.

planets

planets and stars; and from this place being so full of religious buildings, antiquity gave it the name of *Teotihuacan*. BOOK VI.

The number of temples throughout the whole Mexican empire was very great. Torquemada thought there might be above forty thousand; but I am persuaded they would far exceed that number, if we should take the lesser ones into the account; for there is not an inhabited place without one temple, nor any place of any extent without a considerable number.

The architecture of the great temples was for the most part the same with that of the great temple of Mexico; but there were many likewise of a different structure. Many consisted of a single body in the form of a pyramid, with a stair-case; others of ordinary bodies, with similar stair-cases, as appears in the subjoined plate, which is copied from one published by Didaco Valadès in his *Christian Rhetoric* (i).

The superstition of those people not contented with such a great number of temples in their cities, villages, and hamlets, erected many altars upon the tops of the hills, in the woods, and in the streets, not only for the purpose of encouraging the idolatrous worship of travellers, but for the celebration of certain sacrifices to the gods of mountains and other rustic deities.

The revenues of the great temple of Mexico, like those of the other temples of the court and the empire, were very large. Each temple had its own lands and possessions, and even its own peasants to cultivate them. Thence was drawn all that was necessary for the maintenance of the priests, together with the wood which was consumed in great quantities in the temples.

The priests that were the stewards of the temples frequently visited their possessions, and those who cultivated them, thought themselves happy in contributing by their labour to the worship of the gods and the support of their ministers. In the kingdom of Acolhuacan, those nine and twenty cities which provided necessaries for the royal palace,

SECT. XIII.  
Revenues of  
the temples.

(i) Didaco Valadès Franciscano, after having been employed many years in the conversion of the Mexicans, came to Rome, where he was made procurator-general of his order. A little time after he published his learned and valuable work in Latin, intitled, *Rhetorica Christiana*, dedicated to pope Gregory the XIIIth, adorned with many representations of Mexican antiquities.

were



**BOOK VI.** were likewise obliged to provide for the temples. There is reason to believe that that tract of country, which went under the name of *Teotlalpan* (land of the gods), was so named from being among the possessions of the temples. There were besides great numbers daily of free-offerings, from the devout of every kind, of provisions and first fruits, which were presented in returning thanks for seasonable rains and other blessings of heaven. Near the temples were the granaries where all the grain and other provisions, necessary for the maintenance of the priests, were kept; and the overplus was annually distributed to the poor, for whom also there were hospitals in the larger towns.

**SECT. XIV.**  
Number and  
different  
ranks of the  
priests.

The number of the priests among the Mexicans corresponded with the multitude of gods and temples; nor was the homage which they paid to the deities themselves much greater than the veneration in which they held their ministers. We may form some conjecture of the immense number of priests in the Mexican empire, from the number within the area of the great temple, which some ancient historians tell us, amounted to five thousand. Nor will that calculation appear surprising, when we consider that in that place there were four hundred priests consecrated to the service of the god *Tezcatzoncatl* alone. Every temple, indeed, had a considerable number, so that I should not think it rash to affirm, that there could not be less than a million of priests throughout the empire. Their number could not fail to be increased from the great respect paid to the priesthood, and the high opinion they conceived of the office of serving in the worship of the gods. The great men even vied with one another in consecrating their children for some time to the service of the temples; while the inferior nobility employed theirs in works without, such as carrying wood, feeding and keeping up the fire of the stoves, and other things of that kind; all considering the honour of serving in the worship of the gods as the greatest to which they could aspire.

There were several different orders and degrees among the priests. The chief of all were the two high priests, to whom they gave the names of *Teoteuēlli* (divine lord), and *Hueiteopixqui* (great priest). That eminent dignity was never conferred but upon such as were distinguished for their birth, their probity, and their great knowledge of every thing connected with the ceremonies of their religion. The high-

high-priests were the oracles whom the kings consulted in all the most important affairs of the state, and no war was ever undertaken without their approbation. It belonged to them to anoint the king after his election, and to open the breast, and tear out the hearts of the human victims, at the most solemn sacrifices. The high-priest in the kingdom of Acolhuacan was, according to some historians, always the second son of the king. Among the Totonacas he was anointed with the elastic gum mixed with children's blood, and this they called the *divine unction* (*i*). Some authors say the same of the high-priest of Mexico.

From what is said it appears, that the high-priests of Mexico were the heads of their religion only among the Mexicans, and not with respect to the other conquered nations : these, even after being subjected to the crown of Mexico, still maintaining their priesthood independent.

The high-priesthood was conferred by election ; but we are ignorant whether the electors were of the priestly order, or the same with those who chose the political head of the empire. The high-priests of Mexico were distinguished by a tuft of cotton which hung from their breast ; and at the principal feasts they were dressed in splendid habits, upon which were represented the insignia of the god whose feast they celebrated. On solemn festivals, the high-priest of the Mixtecas was clothed in a short coat, on which the principal events of their mythology was represented ; above that he had a surplice, and over all a large capuchin ; on his head he wore plumes of green feathers, curiously interwoven with small figures of their gods ; at his shoulder hung one tassel of cotton, and another hung at his arm.

Next to this supreme dignity of the priesthood, the most respectable charge was that of the *Mexicoteobuatzin*, which was conferred by the high-priests. The employment of this officer was to attend to the due observance of the rites and ceremonies, and to watch over the conduct of those priests who had the charge of seminaries, and to punish them when guilty of a misdemeanor. In order to enable him to discharge all the

(*k*) Acosta confounds the divine unction of the high-priest with that of the king ; but it was totally different ; the king did not anoint himself with elastic gum, but with a particular sort of ink.



**BOOK VI.** duties of so extensive an appointment, he was allowed two curates or deputies, the one named the *Huitznabuateobuatzin*, the other the *Tepaneo-buatzin*. The *Mexicoteobuatzin* was the superior-general of all the seminaries; his chief badge of distinction was a little bag of copal, which he always carried along with him.

The *Tlatquimilolteuētlī* managed the œconomy of the sanctuaries, the *Ometochtli* was the chief composer of the hymns which were sung at festivals; the *Epcocuiltzin* (*l*), the master of the ceremonies; the *Tlapixcatzin* the master of the chapel, who not only appointed the music, but superintended the singing and corrected the singers. Others, whose names we omit, to avoid growing tedious to our readers, were the immediate superiors of the colleges of the priests which were consecrated to different gods (*m*). The name *Teopixqui* was also given to the priests, which means the guard or minister of God.

To every division of the capital, and probably, of every other great city, belonged a priest of superior rank, who acted in the quality of rector to that district, and appointed every act of religion which was to be performed within the bounds of his jurisdiction. All these rectors were subject to the authority of the *Mexicoteobuatzin*.

**SECT. XV.**  
The employ-  
ments, drefs,  
and life of  
the priests.

All the offices of religion were divided among the priests. Some were the sacrificers, others the diviners; some were the composers of hymns, others those who sung. Amongst the singers some sung at certain hours of the day, others sung at certain hours of the night. Some priests had the charge of keeping the temple clean, some took care of the ornaments of the altars; to others belonged the instructing of youth, the correcting of the calendar, the ordering of festivals, and the care of the mythological paintings.

Four times a day they offered incense to the idols, namely, at day-break, at mid-day, at sun-set, and at mid-night. The last offering was made by the priest whose turn it was to do so, and the most respectable officers of the temple attended at it. To the sun they made daily new offerings, four times during the day, and five times during

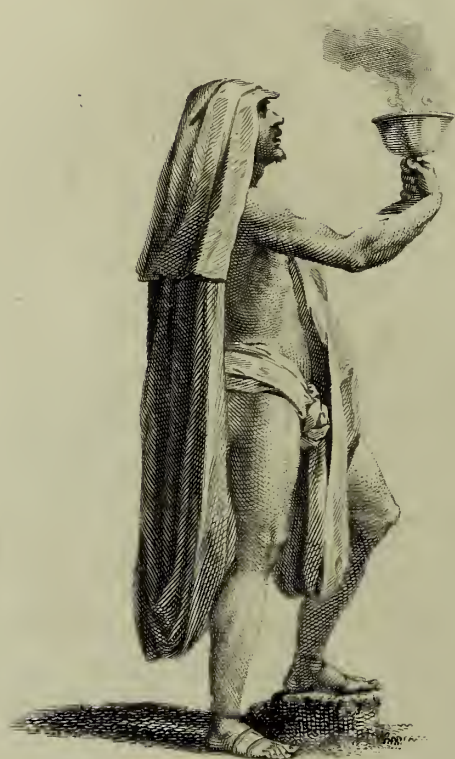
(*l*) Torquemada calls this priest *Epqualiztli*, and Hernandez *Epoaquacuiliztli*; but both of them are mistaken.

(*m*) Whoever is desirous of knowing the other offices and names of the priests, may consult the 8th book of Torquemada, and the account given by Hernandez, which Nieremberg inserted in his Natural History.





*Mexican Priest.*



*Mexican Warrior.*



the night. For incense they generally made use of copal, or some other aromatic gum; but on certain festivals they employed *Chapopotli*, or bitumen of Judea. The censers were commonly made of clay; but they had also censers of gold. Every day the priests, or at least some of them, dyed their whole bodies with ink made of the foot of the *Ocotl*, which is a species of pine very aromatic, and over the ink they painted themselves with ochre or cinnabar, and every evening they bathed in ponds which were within the inclosure of the temple.

The dress of the Mexican priests was no way different from the dress of the common people, except a black cotton mantle, which they wore in the manner of a veil upon their heads; but those who in their monasteries professed a greater austerity of life, went always clothed in black, like the common priests of other nations of the empire. They never shaved, by which means the hair of many of them grew so long as to reach to their legs. It was twisted with thick cotton cords, and bedaubed with ink, forming a weighty mass not less inconvenient to be carried about with them than disgusting and even horrid to view.

Besides the usual unction with ink, another extraordinary and more abominable one was practised every time they went to make sacrifices on the tops of the mountains, or in the dark caverns of the earth. They took a large quantity of poisonous insects, such as scorpions, spiders, and worms, and sometimes even small serpents, burned them over some stove of the temple, and beat their ashes in a mortar together with the foot of the *Ocotl*, tobacco, the herb *Ololiubqui*, and some live insects. They presented this diabolical mixture in small vessels to their gods, and afterwards rubbed their bodies with it. When thus anointed, they became fearless to every danger, being persuaded they were rendered incapable of receiving any hurt from the most noxious reptiles of the earth, or the wildest beasts of the woods. They called it *Teopatli*, or divine medicament, and imagined it to be a powerful remedy for several disorders; on which account those who were sick, and the young children, went frequently to the priests to be anointed with it. The young lads who were trained up in the seminaries were charged with the collecting of such kind of little animals; and by being accustomed at an early age to that kind of employment, they soon lost



BOOK VI. the horror which attends the first familiarity with such reptiles. The priests not only made use of this unction, but had likewise a ridiculous superstitious practice of blowing with their breath over the sick, and made them drink water which they had blessed after their manner. The priests of the god *Ixtlilton*, were remarkable for this custom.

The priests observed many fasts and great austerity of life; they never were intoxicated with drinking; and seldom even tasted wine. The priests of *Tezcatzoncatl* as soon as the daily singing in praise of their god was over, laid a heap of three hundred and three canes on the ground, corresponding to the number of fingers, of which heap only one was bored; every person lifted one, and he who happened to take up the cane which was bored, was the only person who tasted the wine. All the time that they were employed in the service of the temple, they abstained from all other women but their wives; they even affected so much modesty and reserve, that when they met a woman, they fixed their eyes on the ground that they might not see her. Any incontinence amongst the priests was severely punished. The priest who, at *Teohuacan*, was convicted of having violated his chastity, was delivered up by the priests to the people, who at night killed him by the *bastinado*. In *Ichcatlan*, the high-priest was obliged to live constantly within the temple, and to abstain from commerce with any woman whatsoever; and if he unluckily failed in any of his duties, he was certain of being torn in pieces, and his bloody limbs were presented as an example to his successor. They poured boiling water on the head of those who, from laziness, did not rise to the nocturnal duties of the temple, or bored their lips and ears, and if they did not correct that, or any other such fault, they were ducked in the lake and banished from the temple during the festival, which was made to the god of water in the sixth month. The priests in general lived together in communities, subject to superiors who watched over their conduct.

SECT. XVI.  
The priest-  
esses.

The office and character of a priest among the Mexicans was not in its nature perpetual. There were certainly some who dedicated their whole lives to the service of the altars; but others engaged in it only for a certain time, to fulfil some vow made by their fathers, or as a particular act of devotion. Nor was the priesthood confined to the male sex, some women being employed in the immediate service of the temples. They offered

offered incense to the idols, tended the sacred fire, swept the area, prepared the daily offering of provisions, and presented it with their hands to the idols; but they were entirely excluded from the office of sacrificing, and the higher dignities of the priesthood. Among the priestesses, some were destined by their parents from their infancy to the service of the temples; others on account of some particular vow which they had made during sickness, or that they might ensure from their gods a good marriage, or the prosperity of their families, entered upon such offices for one or two years.

The consecration of the first was made in the following manner. As soon as the girl was born, the parents offered her to some god, and informed the rector of that district of it; he gave notice to the Tepanteohuatzin, who, as we have already mentioned, was the superior general of the seminaries. Two months after they carried her to the temple, and put a small broom, and a small censer of clay in her little hands, with a little copal in it, to shew her destination. Every month they repeated the visit to the temple and the offering, together with the bark of some trees for the sacred fire. When the child attained her fifth year, the parents consigned her to the Tepanteohuatzin, who lodged her in a female seminary, where children were instructed in religion, and the proper duties and employments of their sex. The first thing done to those who entered into the service on account of some private vow, was the cutting off their hair. Both the latter and the former lived in great purity of manners, silence, and retirement, under their superiors, without having any communication with men. Some of them rose about two hours before midnight, others at midnight, and others at day-break, to stir up and keep the fire burning, and to offer incense to the idols; and although in this function they assembled with the priests, they were separated from each other, the men forming one wing and the women another, both under the view of their superiors, who prevented any disorder from happening. Every morning they prepared the offering of provisions which was presented to the idols, and swept the lower area of the temple, and the time which was not occupied in these, or other religious duties, was employed in spinning and weaving beautiful cloths for the dress of the idols, and the decoration of the sanctuaries. Nothing was more



BOOK VI. zealously attended to than the chastity of these virgins. Any trespass of this nature was unpardonable; if it remained an entire secret, the female culprit endeavoured to appease the anger of the gods by fasting and austerity of life; for she dreaded that in punishment of her crime her flesh would rot. When a virgin, destined from her infancy to the worship of the gods, arrived at the age of sixteen or eighteen, at which years they were usually married, her parents sought for a husband to her, and after they found one, presented to the Tepanteohuatzin a certain number of quails in plates curiously varnished, and a certain quantity of copal, of flowers and provisions, accompanied with a studied address, in which they thanked him for the care and attention he had shewn in the education of their daughter, and demanded his permission to settle her in marriage. The Tepanteohuatzin granted the request, in a reply to the address, exhorting his pupil to a perseverance in virtue, and the fulfillment of all the duties of the married state.

SECT. XVII.  
Different religious orders.

Amongst the different orders or congregations both of men and women, who dedicated themselves to the worship of some particular gods, that of Quetzalcoatl is worthy to be mentioned. The life led in the colleges or monasteries of either sex, which were devoted to this imaginary god, was uncommonly rigid and austere. The dress of the order was extremely decent; they bathed regularly at midnight, and watched until about two hours before day, singing hymns to their god, and observing many rules of an austere life. They were at liberty to go to the mountains at any hour of the day or night, to spill their blood; this was permitted them from a respect to the virtue which they were all thought to possess. The superiors of the monasteries bore also the name of Quetzalcoatl, and were persons of such high authority, that they visited none but the king when it was necessary. The members of this religious order were destined to it from their infancy. The parents of the child invited the superior to an entertainment, who usually deputed one of his subjects. The deputy brought the child to him, upon which he took the boy in his arms, and offered him with a prayer to Quetzalcoatl, and put a collar about his neck, which was to be worn until he was seven years old. When the boy completed his second year, the superior made a small incision in his breast, which, like the collar, was another mark of his destination. As soon

soon as the boy attained his seventh year, he entered into the monastery, having first heard a long discourse from his parents, in which they advertised him of the vow which they had made to Quetzalcoatl, and exhorted him to fulfil it, to behave well, to submit himself to his prelate, and to pray to the gods for his parents and the whole nation. This order was called *Tlamacazcajtōl*, and the members of it *Tlamacazque*.

Another order which was called *Telpochtlixtli*, or the youths, on account of its being composed of youths and boys, was consecrated to Tezcatlipoca. This was also a destination from infancy, attended with almost the same ceremonies as that of Quetzalcoatl; however, they did not live together in one community, but each individual had his own home. In every district of the city they had a superior, who governed them, and a house where they assembled at sun-set to dance and sing the praises of their god. Both sexes met at this dance, but without committing the smallest disorder, owing to the vigilance of the superiors, and the rigour with which all misdemeanors were punished.

Among the Totonacas was an order of monks devoted to their goddess Centeotl. They lived in great retirement and austerity, and their life, excepting their superstition and vanity, was perfectly unimpeachable. None but men above sixty years of age who were widowers, estranged from all commerce with women, and of virtuous life, were admitted into this monastery. Their number was fixed, and when any one died another was received in his stead. These monks were so much esteemed, that they were not only consulted by the common people, but likewise by the first nobility and the high-priest. They listened to consultations sitting upon their heels, with their eyes fixed upon the ground, and their answers were received like oracles even by the kings of Mexico. They were employed in making historical paintings, which they gave to the high-priest that he might exhibit them to the people.

But the most important duty of the priesthood, and the chief ceremony of the religion of the Mexicans, consisted in the sacrifices which they made occasionally to obtain any favour from heaven, or in gratitude for those favours which they had already received. This is a subject which we would willingly pass over, if the laws of history permitted,

SECT.  
XVIII.  
Common sacrifice of human victims.



mitted, to prevent the disgust which the description of such abominable acts of cruelty must cause to our readers; for although there has hardly been a nation which has not practised similar sacrifices, it would be difficult to find one which has carried them to so great an excess as the Mexicans appear to have done.

We are ignorant what sort of sacrifices may have been practised by the ancient Toltecas. The Chechemecas continued long without using them, having at first neither idols, temples, nor priests, nor offering any thing to their gods, the Sun and Moon, but herbs, flowers, fruits, and copal. Those nations never thought of sacrificing human victims, until the example of the Mexicans banished the first impressions of nature from their minds. What they report touching the origin of such barbarous sacrifices we have already explained; namely, that which appears in their history concerning the first sacrifice of the four Xochimilcan prisoners which they made when in Colhuacan. It is probable, that at the time when the Mexicans were insulated in the lake, and particularly while they remained subject to the dominion of the Tepanecas, the sacrifice of human victims must have happened very seldom, as they neither had prisoners, nor could purchase slaves for sacrifices. But when they had enlarged their dominions, and multiplied their victories, sacrifices became frequent and on some festivals the victims were numerous.

The sacrifices varied with respect to the number, place, and mode, according to the circumstances of the festival. In general the victims suffered death by having their breasts opened; but others were drowned in the lake, others died of hunger shut up in caverns of the mountains, and lastly, some fell in the gladiatorial sacrifice. The customary place was the temple, in the upper area of which stood the altar destined for ordinary sacrifices. The altar of the greater temple of Mexico was a green stone (probably jasper) convex above, and about three feet high, and as many broad, and more than five feet long. The usual ministers of the sacrifice were six priests, the chief of whom was the *Topiltzin*, whose dignity was pre-eminent and hereditary; but at every sacrifice he assumed the name of that god to whom it was made. For the performance of this function, he was clothed in a red habit, similar in make to the scapulary of the moderns, fringed with





*A common Sacrifice.*



with cotton; on his head he wore a crown of green and yellow feathers, at his ears hung golden ear-rings and green jewels, (perhaps emeralds), and at his under-lip a pendant of turquoise. The other five ministers were dressed in white habits of the same make, but embroidered with black; their hair was wrapped up, their heads were bound with leathern thongs, their foreheads armed with little shields of paper painted of various colours, and their bodies dyed all over black. These barbarous ministers carried the victim entirely naked to the upper area of the temple, and after having pointed out to the bystanders the idol to whom the sacrifice was made, that they might pay their adoration to it, extended him upon the altar; four priests held his legs and arms, and another kept his head firm with a wooden instrument made in form of a coiled serpent, which was put about his neck; and on account of the altar being convex, the body of the victim lay arched, the breast and belly being raised up and totally prevented from the least movement. The inhuman Topiltzin then approached, and with a cutting knife made of flint, dexterously opened his breast and tore out his heart, which, while yet palpitating, he offered to the sun, and afterwards threw it at the feet of the idol; then taking it up again he offered it to the idol itself, and afterwards burned it, preserving the ashes with the utmost veneration. If the idol was gigantic and hollow, it was usual to introduce the heart of the victim into its mouth with a golden spoon. It was customary also to anoint the lips of the idol and the cornices of the door of the sanctuary with the victim's blood. If he was a prisoner of war, as soon as he was sacrificed they cut off his head to preserve the skull, and threw the body down the stairs to the lower area, where it was taken up by the officer or soldier to whom the prisoner had belonged, and carried to his house to be boiled and dressed as an entertainment for his friends. If he was not a prisoner of war, but a slave purchased for a sacrifice, the proprietor carried off the carcase from the altar for the same purpose. They eat only the legs, thighs, and arms, and burned the rest, or preserved it for food to the wild beasts or birds of prey which were kept in the royal palaces. The Otomies, after having killed the victim, tore the body in pieces, which they sold at market. The Zapotecas sacrificed men to their



## BOOK VI.

their gods, women to their goddesses, and children to some other diminutive deities.

This was the most common mode of sacrifice, but often attended with some circumstances of still greater cruelty, as we shall see hereafter; other kinds of sacrifices which they used were much less frequent. At the festival of *Tetecinan*, the woman who represented this goddess was beheaded on the shoulders of another woman. At the festival of the arrival of the gods, they put the victims to death by fire. At one of the festivals made in honour of *Tlaloc*, they sacrificed two children of both sexes by drowning them in a certain place of the lake. At another festival of the same god, they purchased three little boys of six or seven years of age, shut them up inhumanly in a cavern, and left them to die of fear and hunger.

SECT. XIX.  
The gladiatorian sacrifice.

The most celebrated sacrifice among the Mexicans was that called by the Spaniards with much propriety *the gladiatorian*. This was a very honourable death, and only prisoners who were renowned for their bravery were permitted to die by it. Near to the greater temple of large cities, in an open space of ground sufficient to contain an immense croud of people, was a round terrace, eight feet high, upon which was placed a large round stone, resembling a mill-stone in figure, but greatly larger, and almost three feet high, well polished, with figures cut upon it (*n*). On this stone, which was called the *Temalacatl*, the prisoner was placed, armed with a shield and a short sword, and tied by one foot. A Mexican officer or soldier, better accoutred in arms, mounted to combat with him. Every one will be able to imagine the efforts made by the desperate victim to defend his life, and also those of the Mexican to save his honour and reputation, before the multitude of people that assembled at such a spectacle. If the prisoner remained vanquished, immediately a priest named *Chalchiuh-tepehua*, carried him dead or alive to the altar of the common sacrifices, opened his breast, and took out his heart, while the victor was applauded by the assembly, and rewarded by the king with some military honour. But if the prisoner

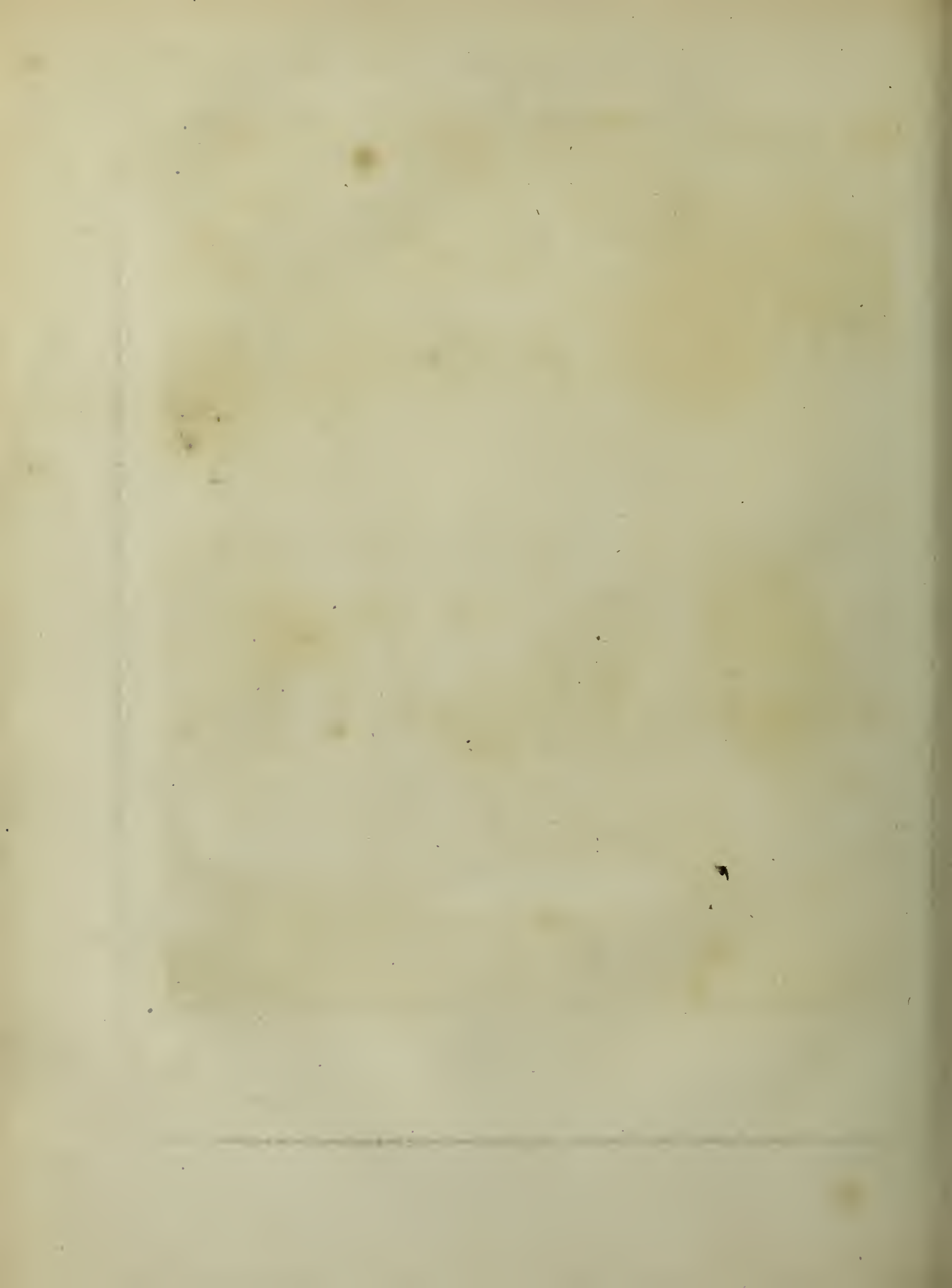
(*n*) The form of the edifices represented in the plate of the gladiatorian sacrifice is a mere caprice of the designer; there never was any thing else than the terrace and the battlements.





*A Gladiatorial Sacrifice.*





conquered six different combatants, who came successively to fight with him, agreeable to the account given by the conqueror Cortes, he was granted his life, his liberty, and all that had been taken from him, and returned with glory to his native country (*o*). The same author relates, that in a battle between the Cholulans and Huexotzincas, the principal lord of Cholula grew so warm in the contest, that having inadvertently removed to a great distance from his own people he was made prisoner in spite of his bravery, and conducted to Huexotzinco, where being put upon the gladiatorian stone, he conquered seven combatants which were opposed to him, and gained his liberty; but the Huexotzincas foreseeing, that on account of his singular courage he would become the cause of many disasters to them if they granted him his liberty, put him to death contrary to universal custom; by which act they rendered themselves eternally infamous among those nations.

With respect to the number of the victims which were annually sacrificed we can affirm nothing; the opinions of historians on that head being extremely different (*p*). The number of twenty thousand, which is conjectured to approach the nearest to truth, does not appear to us improbable, if we include in it all the victims which were sacrificed throughout the whole empire; but if that number comprehends, as some historians assert, the infants only, or the victims which were sacrificed on the mountain Tepeyacac, or in the capital, we think it altogether incredible. It is certain, that the number of sacrifices was

SECT. XX.  
The number  
of sacrifices  
uncertain.

(*o*) Several historians say, that when the first combatant was overcome the prisoner became free; but we are rather inclined to credit the Conqueror; for it is not probable, that they would liberate a prisoner for so small a risk who might still prove destructive to them, or that they would deprive their gods of a victim so acceptable to their cruelty.

(*p*) Zumarraga, the first bishop of Mexico, says, in a letter of the 12th of June, 1531, addressed to the general chapter of his order, that in that capital alone twenty thousand human victims were annually sacrificed. Some authors, quoted by Gomara, affirm, that the number of the sacrificed amounted to fifty thousand. Acofta writes, that there was a certain day of the year on which five thousand were sacrificed in different places of the empire; and another day on which they sacrificed twenty thousand. Some authors believe, that on the mountain Tepeyacac alone, twenty thousand were sacrificed to the goddess Tonantzin. Torquemada, in quoting, though unfaithfully, the letter of Zumarraga, says, that there were twenty thousand infants annually sacrificed. But on the contrary, Las Casas, in his refutation of the bloody book, wrote by Dr. Sepulveda, reduces the sacrifices to so small a number, that we are left to believe, they amounted not to fifty, or at most not to a hundred. We are strongly of opinion, that all these authors have erred in the number, Las Casas by diminution, the rest by exaggeration of the truth.



BOOK VI. not limited, but always proportioned either to the number of prisoners which were made in war, to the necessities of the state, or the nature of the festivals, as appears from the dedication of the greater temple of Mexico, on which occasion the cruelty of the Mexicans exceeded all bounds of belief. It is not, however, to be doubted, that the sacrifices were very numerous; the conquests of the Mexicans having been extremely rapid, and as their aim in war was not so much to kill as to make prisoners of the enemy for this purpose. If to these victims we add the slaves which were purchased for the same end, and many criminals who were condemned to expiate their crimes by the sacrifice of their lives, we shall find the number greatly exceed that computed by Las Casas, who was too anxious to exculpate the Americans of all the excesses of which they were accused by the Spaniards (*q*). The sacrifices multiplied in *Divine* years, and still more in *Secular* years.

The Mexicans were accustomed at their festivals to clothe the victim in the same dress and badges in which they dressed that god to whom the sacrifice was made; thus habited, the victim went round the city demanding alms for the temple, accompanied with a guard of soldiers. If any one accidentally made his escape, the corporal of the guard was substituted in his stead as a punishment for his carelessness. They used also to feed and fatten the victims, as they did several animals for the table.

The religion of the Mexicans was not confined to these sacrifices; offerings were made of various kinds of animals. They sacrificed quails and falcons to their god Huitzilopochtli, and hares, rabbits, deer, and coyotos to their god Mixcoatli. They daily made an offering of quails to the sun. Every day as the sun was about to rise, several priests, standing on the upper area of the temple, with their faces towards the east, each with a quail in his hand, saluted that luminary's appearance with music, and made an offering of the quails after cutting off their heads. This sacrifice was succeeded by the burning of incense, with a loud accompaniment of musical instruments.

(*q*) We cannot account why Las Casas, who, in his writings makes use of the testimony of Zumarraga, and other churchmen, against the conquerors, should afterwards so openly contradict them respecting the number of the sacrifices.

In acknowledgment of the power of their gods, they also made offerings of various kinds of plants, flowers, jewels, gums, and other inanimate substances. To their gods Tlaloc and Coatlicue they offered the first-blown flowers; and to Centeotl, the first maize of every year. They made oblations of bread, various pastes, and ready dressed victuals in such abundance, as to be sufficient to supply all the ministers of the temple. Every morning were seen at the foot of the altars innumerable dishes and porringers of boiling food, that the steams arising from them might reach the nostrils of the idols, and nourish their immortal gods.

The most frequent oblation, however, was that of copal. All daily burned incense to their idols; no house was without censers. The priests in the temple, fathers of families in their houses, and judges in their tribunals, whenever they pronounced sentence in an important cause, whether civil or criminal, offered incense to the four principal winds. But incense-offering among the Mexicans, and other nations of Anahuac, was not only an act of religion towards their gods, but also a piece of civil courtesy to lords and ambassadors.

The superstition and cruelties of the Mexicans were imitated by all the nations which they conquered, or that were contiguous to the empire, without any difference, except that the number of sacrifices amongst those nations was less, and that particular circumstances sometimes attended them. The Tlascalans, at one of their festivals, fixed a prisoner to a high cross, and shot arrows at him; and upon another occasion, they tied a prisoner to a low cross, and killed him by the bastinado.

The sacrifices celebrated every fourth year by the Quauhtitlans in honour of the god of fire, were inhuman and dreadful. A day before the festival, they planted six very lofty trees in the under area of the temple, sacrificed two slaves, stripped their skins off, and took out the bones of their thighs. The next day two eminent priests, clothed themselves in the bloody skins, took the bones in their hands, and descended with solemn steps and dismal howlings, down the stairs of the temple. The people who were assembled in crowds below, called out in a loud voice, "Behold there come our gods." As soon as they reached the lower area, they began a dance to the sound of musical instruments, which lasted the greatest part of the day. In the meanwhile, the people sacrificed an incredible quantity of quails, the num-

SECT. XXI.  
Inhuman sa-  
crifices in  
Quauhtitlan.



BOOK VI. ber of them being never less than eight thousand. When these sacrifices were over, the priests carried six prisoners to the tops of the trees, and after tying them there, descended; but they had hardly time to reach the ground, before the unhappy victims were pierced with a multitude of arrows. The priests mounted again to cut down the dead bodies, and let them drop from the height; immediately their breasts were opened, and their hearts torn out, according to the custom of those people. The victims as well as the quails were shared among the priests and nobles of that city, for the banquets which crowned their barbarous and detestable festival.

SECT. XXII.  
Austerities  
and fasting of  
the Mexi-  
cans.

While they were thus cruel to others, it is not wonderful that they likewise practised inhumanity towards themselves. Being accustomed to bloody sacrifices of their prisoners, they also failed not to shed abundance of their own blood, conceiving the streams which flowed from their victims insufficient to quench the diabolical thirst of their gods. It makes one shudder to read the austerities which they exercised upon themselves, either in atonement of their transgressions, or in preparation for their festivals. They mangled their flesh as if it had been insensible, and let their blood run in such profusion, that it appeared to be a superfluous fluid of the body.

The effusion of blood was frequent and daily with some of the priests, to which practice they gave the name of *Tlamacazqui*. They pierced themselves with the sharpest spines of the aloe, and bored several parts of their bodies, particularly their ears, lips, tongue, and the fat of their arms and legs. Through the holes which they made with these spines, they introduced pieces of cane, the first of which were small pieces, but every time this penitential suffering was repeated, a thicker piece was used. The blood which flowed from them was carefully collected in leaves of the plant *acxojatl* (*r*). They fixed the bloody spines in little balls of hay, which they exposed upon the battlements of the walls of the temple, to testify the penance which they did for the people. Those who exercised such severities upon themselves within the inclosure of the greater temple of Mexico,

(*r*) *Acxojatl* is a tree of several upright stems, with long leaves, which are strong and symmetrically disposed. They made formerly and still make excellent brooms of this plant.

bathed

bathed themselves in a pond that was formed there, which from being always tinged with blood was called *Ezapan*. There was a certain fixed number of canes to be made use of on this occasion, which, after being once used were preserved as attestations of their penitence. Besides those and other austere practices of which we shall treat shortly, watching and fasting was very frequent amongst the Mexicans. A festival hardly occurred for which they did not prepare themselves with fasting for some days, more or less, according to the prescriptions of their ritual. From all that is to be inferred from their history, their fasting consisted in abstaining from flesh and wine, and in eating but once a day; this some did at mid-day, others after that time, and some tasted nothing till evening. Fasting was generally accompanied with watching and the effusion of blood, and then no person was permitted to have commerce with any woman, not even with his own wife.

Some fasts were general and observed by the whole people; namely, the fast of five days before the festival of Mixcoatl, which was observed even by children; the fast of four days before the festival of Tezcatlipoca, and also, as we suspect, that which was made previous to the festival of the sun (s). During this fast the king retired into a certain place of the temple, where he watched and shed blood, according to the custom of his nation. Any other fasts bound only particular individuals, such as that which was observed by the proprietors of victims the day before a sacrifice. The proprietors of prisoners which were sacrificed to the god Xipe, fasted twenty days. The nobles as well as the king had a house within the precincts of the temple, containing numerous chambers, where they occasionally retired to do penance. On one of the festivals, all those persons who exercised public offices, after their daily duty was over, retired there at evening for this purpose. In the third month the Tlamacazqui, or penance-doers watched every night; and in the fourth month they were attended in their duty by the nobility.

In Mixteca, where there were many monasteries, the first-born sons of lords, before they took possession of their estates, were subjected to a

(s) The fast which was held in honour of the sun was called *Netonatiubzahualo*, or *Netonatiubzahualitzli*. Dr. Hernandez says, it was held every two hundred, or three hundred days. We suspect that it was kept on the day *I.Olin*, which occurred every two hundred and sixty days.



## BOOK VI.

rigorous penance during a whole year. They conducted the heir with a numerous attendance to a monastery, where they stripped off his garments, and clothed him in rags daubed over with *olli*, or elastic gum, rubbed his face, belly, and back, with stinking herbs, and delivered a small lance of *itztli* to him, that he might draw his own blood. They restricted him to a very abstemious diet, subjected him to the hardest labours, and punished him severely for any failure in duty. At the end of the year, after being washed and cleansed by four girls, with sweet scented water, he was reconducted to his house with great pomp and music.

In the principal temple of Teohuacan, four priests constantly resided, who were famous for the austerity of their lives. Their dress was the same with that of the common people; their diet was limited to a loaf of maize of about two ounces in weight, and a cup of *atolli*, or gruel, made of the same grain. Every night two of them kept watch, employing their time in singing hymns to their gods, in offering incense, which they did four times during the night, and in shedding their blood upon the stones of the temple. Their fasting was continual during the four years which they persevered in that life, except upon days of festival, one of which happened every month, when they were at liberty to eat as much as they pleased; but in preparation for every festival, they practised the usual austere rules, boring their ears with the spines of the aloe, and passing little pieces of cane through the holes to the number of sixty, all of which differed in thickness in the manner above mentioned. At the end of four years, other four priests were introduced to lead the same kind of life; and if before the completion of that term any one of them happened to die, another was substituted in his place, that the number might never be incomplete. These priests were so high in respect and esteem as to be held in veneration even by the kings of Mexico: but woe unto him who violated his chastity; for, if after a strict examination the crime was proved, he was killed by *bastinados*, his body was burned, and his ashes scattered to the winds.

Upon occasion of any public calamity, the Mexican high-priest always observed a most extraordinary fast. For this purpose he retired to a wood, where he constructed a hut for himself, covered with  
branches,

branches, which were always fresh and green ; as whenever the first became dry, new ones were spread in their place. Shut up in this hut he passed nine or ten months in constant prayer and frequent effusions of blood, deprived of all communication with men, and without any other food than raw maize and water. This fast was not indispensable, nor did all the high-priests observe it ; nor did those who attempted it ever do it more than once in their lives ; and certainly it is not probable, that those who survived so rigorous and long an abstinence, were ever able to repeat it.

The fast observed by the Tlascalans every divine year, at which period they made a most solemn festival in honour of their god *Camaxtle*, was likewise very singular. When the time of commencing it was arrived, all the *Tlamacazquis* were assembled by their chief *Archcaubtli*, who made them a serious and grave exhortation to penitence, and forewarned them if any one of them should find that he was incapable of performing it, that he should declare so within five days ; for that if, after that space of time was elapsed, and the fast was once begun, he should happen to fail and renounce the attempt, he would be deemed unworthy of the company of the gods, his priesthood would be taken from him, and his estate sequestered. At the expiration of the five days, which was allowed for the purpose of deliberation, the chief, attended by all those who had courage to attempt this penitential duty, the number of whom used to exceed two hundred, ascended the very lofty mountain Matlalcueje, on the top of which was a sanctuary, consecrated to the goddess of water. The *Archcaubtli* mounted to the top to make his oblation of gems, precious feathers, and copal, while the others waited in the middle of the ascent, praying their goddess to give them strength and courage to go through their penance. They afterwards descended from the mountain, and caused a number of little knives of itzli, and a great quantity of small rods of different thickneses to be made. The labourers upon those instruments fasted five days before they began their work, and if any little knife or rod happened to break, it was accounted a bad omen, and the workman was considered to have broke the fast. The *Tlamacazqui* then began their fast, which did not last less than one hundred and sixty days. The first day they bored holes in their tongues, through which they drew the little rods, and notwith-

SECT.  
XXIII.  
Remarkable  
acts of peni-  
tence of the  
Tlascalans.



## BOOK VI.

standing the excessive pain and loss of blood which they suffered, they were obliged all the while to sing aloud songs to their god, and every twenty days this cruel operation was repeated. When the first eighty days of the fast of the priests were elapsed, a general fast, from which even the heads of the republic were not exempted, began with the people, and continued an equally long time. During this period, no person was allowed to bathe, nor to eat pepper, which was the usual seasoning of all their dishes. To such excesses and cruelty did fanaticism carry those nations.

## S E C T.

## XXIV.

The age, century and year of the Mexicans.

All that we have hitherto related does not so much make known the religion of the Mexicans, and the extravagance of their horrible superstition, as the number of their festivals, and the rites which were observed at them; but before we enter more deeply into this subject, it is necessary to give some account of their mode of dividing time, and the method which they adopted to measure days, months, years, and centuries. What we have to communicate on this head has been carefully investigated and certified by intelligent men, who are worthy of the utmost credit, who have applied with the utmost assiduity to this study, and who have diligently examined the ancient paintings, and obtained information from the best instructed persons among the Mexicans and Acolhuans. We are particularly indebted to the religious missionaries Motolinia and Sahagun, from whose writings Torquemada has taken all that is valuable in his work, and to the very learned Mexican D. Carlo Seguenza, whose opinions we have found to be just and accurate by the examination which we have made of several Mexican paintings, in which months, years, and centuries, are distinctly represented by their proper figures.

The Mexicans, the Acolhuans, and all the other nations of Anahuac, distinguished four ages of time by as many suns. The first named *Atonatiub*, that is the sun, or the age of water, commenced with the creation of the world, and continued until the time at which all mankind almost perished in a general inundation, along with the first sun. The second *Tlaltónatiub*, the age of earth, lasted from the time of the general inundation until the ruin of the giants, and the great earthquakes, which concluded in like manner the second sun. The third, *Ebècatónatiub*, the age of air, lasted from the destruction

of

of the giants until the great whirlwinds, in which all mankind perished along with the third sun. The fourth *Tletonatiuh*, the age of fire, began at the last restoration of the human race, and was to continue as we have already mentioned in their mythology, until the fourth sun, and the earth were destroyed by fire. This age it was supposed would end at the conclusion of one of their centuries; and thus we may account for these noisy festivals in honour of the god of fire, which were celebrated at the beginning of every century, as a thanksgiving for his restraining his voracity, and deferring the termination of the world.

The Mexicans, and the other polished nations of Anahuac, used the same method to compute centuries, years, and months, as the ancient Toltecas. Their century consisted of fifty-two years, which were subdivided into four periods of thirteen years each, and two centuries formed an age, which was called by them *Huebuetiliztli*, that is, old age, of a hundred and four years (*t*). They gave to the end of the century the name of *Toxiuhmolpia*, which signifies, the tying of our years; because by it the two centuries were joined together to form an age. Their years had four names, which were *Tochtli*, rabbit; *Acatl*, cane or reed; *Tecpatl*, flint; and *Calli*, house; and of these with different numbers their century was composed. The first year of the century was 1. *Tochtli*, the second, 2. *Acatl*, the third, 3. *Tecpatl*, the fourth, 4. *Calli*, the fifth, 5. *Tochtli*, and so on to the thirteenth year, which was 13. *Tochtli*, and terminated the first period. They began the second period with 1. *Acatl*, which was succeeded by 2. *Tecpatl*, 3. *Calli*, 4. *Tochtli*, until it was completed by 13. *Acatl*. In like manner the third period began with 1. *Tecpatl*, and finished with 13. *Tecpatl*; and the fourth commenced with 1. *Calli*, and terminated together with the century in 13. *Calli*; so that there being four names and thirteen numbers, no one year could be confounded with another (*u*).

All

(*t*) Though some authors have given the name of century to their age, and that of half century to their century, it is of little consequence, as their manner of computing years and distributing time is not in the least altered by it.

(*u*) Boturini affirms, in contradiction to the general opinion of authors, that they did not begin all their centuries with 1. *Tochtli*; but sometimes with 1. *Acatl*; 1. *Tecpatl*, or 1. *Calli*. He is mistaken, however, for it appears both from the best informed ancient authors, and the paintings examined by ourselves, that the Mexican century began always with 1. *Tochtli*. This author says also, that in the course of four centuries the same name or character was ne-



BOOK VI. All this will be more clearly understood in the table of the century, which we shall afterwards subjoin.

The Mexican year consisted like ours, of three hundred and sixty-five days; for although it was composed of eighteen months, each of which contained twenty days, which make up only three hundred and sixty, they added after the last month five days, which they called *Nemontemi*, or useless; because in these days they did nothing but receive and return visits. The year 1 Tochtli, the first of their century, began upon the twenty-sixth day of February (x); but every four years the Mexican century anticipated one day, on account of the odd day of our bissextile, or leap-year; from whence in the last years of the Mexican century, the year began on the fourteenth of February, on account of the thirteen days which intervene in the course of fifty-two years. But at the expiration of the century, the commencement of the year returned to the twenty-sixth of February.

The names which they gave their months were taken both from the employments and festivals which occurred in them, and also from the accidents of the season which attended them. These names appear differently arranged among authors; because, in fact their arrangement was not only different among different nations, but even among the the Mexicans themselves it varied. The following was the most common:

- |                                |  |                            |
|--------------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| 1. <i>Atlacabualco</i> (y).    |  | 4. <i>Hueitozoztli</i> .   |
| 2. <i>Tlacaxipehualiztli</i> . |  | 5. <i>Toxcatl</i> .        |
| 3. <i>Tozoztontli</i> .        |  | 6. <i>Etzalcualiztli</i> . |

ver repeated with the same number; but how is it possible, that this could happen in the period of two hundred and eight years, while the characters were only four and the numbers used but thirteen, as he himself allows.

(x) Authors differ in opinion respecting the day on which the Mexican year commenced. The reason of this was unquestionably the difference which is occasioned by our leap years, to which probably those authors did not advert. It may also have been the case, that some of them spoke of the astronomical year of the Mexicans, and not of the religious, of which we treat.

(y) Gomara, Valadès, and other authors make *Tlacaxipehualiztli*, the first month of the Mexican year, which in our table is the second. The authors of the edition of the Letters of Cortes, published at Mexico in 1786, make *Atemoztli* the first, which is the 16th in our table. But Motolinia, whose authority has most weight, has put, as we do, *Atlacabualco* for the first month; and Torquemada, Betancourt, and Martino di Leon, a Dominican, thinks as he does. To avoid troubling our readers, we omit the strong reasons which have induced us to adopt our present opinion.

7. *Tecuil-*

- |                            |                             |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 7. <i>Tecuilbuitontli.</i> | 13. <i>Tepeilbuitl.</i>     |
| 8. <i>Hueitecuilbuitl.</i> | 14. <i>Quecholli.</i>       |
| 9. <i>Tlaxochimaco.</i>    | 15. <i>Panquetzalitzli.</i> |
| 10. <i>Xocobuetzi.</i>     | 16. <i>Atemoztli.</i>       |
| 11. <i>Ochpaniztli.</i>    | 17. <i>Tititl.</i>          |
| 12. <i>Teotleco.</i>       | 18. <i>Izcalli.</i>         |

Their month consisted as we have already mentioned of twenty days, the names of which are these :

SECT. XXV.  
The Mexican  
month.

- |                       |                              |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Cipaçtli.</i>   | 11. <i>Ozomatli.</i>         |
| 2. <i>Ebècatl.</i>    | 12. <i>Malinalli.</i>        |
| 3. <i>Calli.</i>      | 13. <i>Acatl.</i>            |
| 4. <i>Cuetzpalin.</i> | 14. <i>Ocelotl.</i>          |
| 5. <i>Coatl.</i>      | 15. <i>Quaubtli.</i>         |
| 6. <i>Miquitzli.</i>  | 16. <i>Cozcaquabtli (z).</i> |
| 7. <i>Mazatl.</i>     | 17. <i>Olin tonatiuh.</i>    |
| 8. <i>Tochtli.</i>    | 18. <i>Tecpatl.</i>          |
| 9. <i>Atl.</i>        | 19. <i>Quiabutli.</i>        |
| 10. <i>Itzcuintl.</i> | 20. <i>Xochitl.</i>          |

Although the signs or characters, which are signified by these names, should be distributed among the twenty days, according to the order above, nevertheless in their mode of reckoning, no regard was paid to the division of months, nor that of years, but to periods of thirteen days (similar to those of thirteen years in the century), which run on without interruption from the end of a month or year. The first day of the century was 1. *Cipaçtli*; the second, 2. *Ebècatl*, or wind; the third; 3. *Calli*, or house; and so on to thirteen, which was 13. *Acatl*, or reed. The 14th day began another period, reckoning 1. *Ocelotl* (tyger), 2. *Quaubtli* (eagle), &c. until the completion of the month 7. *Xochitl* (flower), and in the next month they continued to count 8. *Cipaçtli*, 9. *Ebècatl*, &c. Twenty of these periods made in thirteen months a cycle of two hundred and sixty days, and during the whole of this time, the same sign or character was not repeated

(z) Cozcaquauhtli is the name of a bird which we described in our first book. Cav. Boturini puts instead of it *Temetlatl*, or the stone used to grind maize or cocoas.



BOOK VI. with the same number, as will appear from the calendar which we shall give hereafter. On the first day of the fourteenth month, another cycle commenced in the same order of the characters, and of the same number of periods; as the first. If the year had not, besides the eighteen months, had the five days called *Nemontemi*, or if the periods had not been continued in these days, the first day of the second year of the century would have been the same with that of the preceding, 1. *Cipaçtli*; and in like manner, the last day of every year would always have been *Xochitl*; but as the period of thirteen days was continued through the days called *Nemontemi*, on that account the signs or characters changed place, and the sign *Miquixtli*, which occupied in all the months of the first year the sixth place, occupies the first in the second year; and on the other hand, the sign *Cipaçtli*, which in the first year had occupied the first place, has the sixteenth in the second year. To know what ought to be the sign of the first day of any year, there is the following general rule. Every year *Tochtli* begins with *Cipaçtli*, every year *Acatl* with *Miquixtli*, every year *Tecpatl* with *Ozomatli*, and every year *Calli* with *Cozcaquaubtli*, adding always the number of the year to the sign of the day; as for example, the year 1. *Tochtli* has for the first day 1. *Cipaçtli*; so the 2. *Acatl* has 2. *Miquixtli*; The 3. *Tepaçtl* has 3. *Ozomatli*, and 4. *Calli* has 4. *Cozcaquaubtli*, &c. (a).

From what we have already said it will appear, that the number thirteen was held in high estimation by the Mexicans. The four periods of which the century consisted, were each of thirteen years; thirteen months formed their cycle of two hundred and sixty days; and thirteen days their smaller periods, which we have already mentioned. The origin of their esteem for this number was, according to what Sigüenza has said, that thirteen was the number of their greater gods. The number four seems to have been no less esteemed amongst them. As they reckoned four periods of thirteen years each to their century, they also reckoned thirteen periods, of four years each, at the expiration of

(a) Cav. Boturini says, that the year of the Rabbet began uniformly with the day of the Rabbet, the year of the Cane with the day of the Cane, &c. and never with the days which we have mentioned; but we ought to give more faith to Sigüenza, who was certainly better informed in Mexican antiquity. The system of this gentleman is fantastical and full of contradictions.

each of which they made extraordinary festivals. We have already mentioned both the fast of four months, and the Nappapohuallatolli, or general audience which was given every four months.

In respect to civil government, they divided the month into four periods of five days, and on a certain fixed day of each period their fair or great market was held; but being governed even in political matters by principles of religion in the capital, this fair was kept on the days of the Rabbet, the Cane, the Flint, and the House, which were their favourite signs.

The Mexican year consisted of seventy-three periods of thirteen days, and the century of seventy-three periods of thirteen months, or cycles of two hundred and sixty days.

It is certainly not to be doubted, that the Mexican, or Toltecán system of the distribution of time was extremely well digested, though at first view it appears rather intricate and perplexed; hence we may infer with confidence, it was not the work of a rude or unpolished people. That however which is most surprising in their mode of computing time, and which will certainly appear improbable to readers who are but little informed with respect to Mexican antiquity, is, that having discovered the excess of a few hours in the solar above the civil year, they made use of intercalary days to bring them to an equality; but with this difference in regard to the method established by Julius Cæsar in the Roman calendar, that they did not interpose a day every four years, but thirteen days, (making use here even of this favourite number) every fifty-two years; which produces the same regulation of time. At the expiration of the century they broke, as we shall mention hereafter, all their kitchen utensils, fearing that then also the fourth age, the sun and all the world were to be ended, and the last night they performed the famous ceremony of the new fire. As soon as they were assured by the new fire, that a new century, according to their belief, was granted to them by the gods, they employed the thirteen following days, in supplying their kitchen utensils, in furnishing new garments, in repairing their temples and houses, and in making every preparation for the grand festivals of the new century. These thirteen days were the intercalary days represented in their paintings by blue points; they were not included in the century just expired, nor

SECT.  
XXVI.  
Intercalary  
days.



## BOOK VI.

in that which was just commencing, nor did they continue in them their periods of days which they always reckoned from the first day to the last day of the century. When the intercalary days were elapsed, they began the new century with the year 1. Tochtli, and the day 1. Cipaçtli, upon the 26th day of our February, as they did at the beginning of the preceding century. We would not venture to relate these particulars, if we were not supported by the testimony of Dr. Siguenza, who, in addition to his great learning, his critical skill and sincerity, was the person who most diligently exerted himself to illustrate these points, and consulted both the best instructed Mexicans and Tezcucans, and studied their histories and paintings.

Boturini affirms, that a hundred and more years before the Christian era, the Toltecas adjusted their calendar, by adding one day every four years, and that they continued to do so for several centuries, until the Mexicans established the method we have mentioned: that the cause of the new method was, that two festivals concurred upon the same day; the one the moveable festival of Tezcatlipoca, the other that of Huitzilopochtli, which was fixed; and that the Colhuan nation had celebrated the latter, and passed over the former; upon which Tezcatlipoca in anger predicted, that the monarchy of Colhuacan would soon be dissolved; that the worship of the ancient gods of the nation would cease, and that it would remain confined to the worship of one sole divinity, which was never seen nor understood, and subjected to the power of certain strangers who would arrive from distant countries; that the kings of Mexico being made acquainted with this prediction, ordered, that whenever two festivals concurred upon the same day, the principal festival was to be celebrated on such day, and the other on the day after; and that the day which was usually added every four years, should be omitted; and that at the end of the century, the thirteen days should be added instead of them. But we are not willing to give credit to this account.

Two things must appear truly strange in the Mexican system, the one is, that they did not regulate their months by the changes of the moon; the other that they used no particular character to distinguish one century from another. But with respect to the first, we do not mean that their astronomical months did not accord with the lunar periods;







periods; because we know that their year was justly regulated by the sun, and because they used the same name, which was *Metztli*, indifferently for month or moon. The month now mentioned by us is their religious month, according to which they observed the celebration of festivals, and practised divination; not their astronomical month, of which we know nothing unless that it was divided into two periods, that is, into the period of the *watching*, and into that of the *sleep* of the moon. We are however persuaded, that they must have made use of some characters to distinguish one century from another, as this distinction was so very easy and necessary; but we have not been able to ascertain this upon the authority of any historian.

The distribution of the signs or characters, both of days and years, served the Mexicans as superstitious prognostics, according to which they predicted the good or bad fortune of infants from the sign under which they were born; and the happiness or misfortune of marriages, the success of wars, and of every other thing from the day on which they were undertaken or put in execution; and on this account also they considered not only the peculiar character of every day and year, but likewise the ruling character of every period of days or years; for the first sign or character of every period, was the ruling sign through the whole of it. Of merchants we find, that whenever they wished to undertake any journey, they endeavoured to begin it on some day of that period, during which the sign *Coatl* (serpent) ruled, and then they promised themselves much success in their commerce. Those persons who were born under the sign *Quauhtli* (eagle), were suspected to prove mockers and slanderers, if they were males; if females, loquacious and impudent. The concurrence of the year with the day of the Rabbet was esteemed the most fortunate season.

To represent a month they painted a circle or wheel, divided into twenty figures signifying twenty days, as appears in the plate we have given, which is a copy from one published by Valadès, in his *Rettorica Cristiana*, and the only one hitherto published. To represent the year they painted another, which they divided into eighteen figures of the eighteen months, and frequently painted within the wheel the image of the moon. The representation which we have given of this image, was taken from that published by Gemelli, which was a copy from an ancient

SECT.  
XXVII.  
Divination.

SECT.  
XXVIII.  
Figures of  
the century,  
the year, and  
month.



BOOK VI. ancient painting in the possession of Dr. Siguenza (*b*). The century was represented by a wheel divided into fifty-two figures, or rather by four figures which were thirteen times designed. They used to paint a serpent twisted about the wheel, which pointed out by four twists of its body the four principal winds, and the beginnings of the four periods of thirteen years. The wheel which we here present, is a copy of two others, one of which was published by Valadès, and the other by Gemelli, within which we have represented the sun, as was generally done by the Mexicans. In another place we shall explain the figures of these wheels in order to satisfy our curious readers.

SECT.  
XXIX.  
Years and  
months of  
the Chiapanec.

The method adopted by the Mexicans to compute months, years, and centuries, was, as we have already mentioned, common to all the polished nations of Anahuac, without any variation among them except in the names and figures (*c*). The Chiapanec, who, among the tributaries to the crown of Mexico, were the most distant from the capital; instead of the names and the figures of the Rabbet, the Cane, Flint, and House, made use of the names *Votan*, *Lambat*, *Been*, and *Chinan*, and instead of the names of the Mexican days, they adopted the names of twenty illustrious men among their ancestors, among which the four names above mentioned, occupied the same place that the names Rabbet, Cane, Flint, and House, held amongst the Mexican days. The Chiapanec names of the twenty days of the month were the following:

- |                   |                         |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. <i>Mox.</i>    | 7. <i>Moxic.</i>        |
| 2. <i>Igb.</i>    | 8. <i>LAMBAT.</i>       |
| 3. <i>VOTAN.</i>  | 9. <i>Mòb, or Mùlu.</i> |
| 4. <i>Ghanan.</i> | 10. <i>Elab.</i>        |
| 5. <i>Abagh.</i>  | 11. <i>Batz.</i>        |
| 6. <i>Tox.</i>    | 12. <i>Enob.</i>        |

(*b*) Three copies of the Mexican year have been published. The first that of Valadès, the second that of Siguenza, published by Gemelli, and the third that of Boturini, published at Mexico, in 1770. In that of Siguenza, within the wheel of the century, appears that of the year; and in that of Valadès, within both wheels, that of the month is represented. We have separated them to make them more intelligible.

(*c*) Boturini says, that the Indians of the diocese of Guaxaca made their year consist of thirteen months; but it must have been their astronomical or civil year, and not their religious year.

13. *BEEN.*

*Mexican Century.*







13. *BEEN.*14. *Hix.*15. *Tziquin.*16. *Chabin*17. *Chix.*18. *CHINAX.*19. *Cabogh.*20. *Aghual.*

There was no month in which the Mexicans did not celebrate some festival or other, which was either fixed and established to be held on a certain day of the month, or moveable, from being annexed to some signs which did not correspond with the same days in every year. The principal moveable festivals, according to Boturini, were sixteen in number, among which the fourth was that of the god of wine, and the thirteenth, that of the god of fire. With respect to those festivals which were fixed, we shall mention as concisely as possible, as much as we judge will be sufficient to convey a competent idea of the religion and the superstitious disposition of the Mexicans.

On the second day of the first month, they made a great festival to Tlaloc, accompanied with sacrifices of children, which were purchased for that purpose, and a gladiatorian sacrifice; these children, which were purchased, were not sacrificed all at once, but successively so, in the course of three months, which corresponded to those of March and April, to obtain from this god the rains which were necessary for their maize.

SECT. XXX.  
Festivals of  
the four first  
months.

On the first day of the second month, which, in the first year of their century, corresponded to the 18th of March (*d*), they made a most solemn festival to the god Xipe, the sacrifices offered at which were extremely cruel. They dragged the victims by their hair to the upper area of the temple, where, after they were sacrificed in the usual manner, they skinned them, and the priests clothed themselves in their skins, and appeared for some days in these bloody coverings. The owners of prisoners that were sacrificed, were bound to fast for twenty days, after which they made great banquets, at which they dressed the flesh of the victims. The stealers of gold or silver were sacrificed along with prisoners, the law of the kingdom having ordained that punishment for them. The circumstance of skinning the

(*d*) Whenever we mention the correspondence of the Mexican months with ours, it is to be understood of those of the first year of their century.



BOOK VI. victims, obtained to this month the name of *Tlacaxipebualiztli*, or the skinning of men. At this festival, the military went through several exercises of arms and practices of war, and the nobles celebrated with songs the glorious actions of their ancestors. In Tlascala, the nobles, as well as the plebeians had dances, at which they were all dressed in skins of animals, and embroidery of gold and silver. On account of these dances, which were common to all ranks of people, they gave the festival as well as the month the name of *Coailbuitl*, or the general festival.

In the third month, which began on the 7th of April, the second festival of Tlaloc was celebrated with the sacrifice of some children. The skins of the victims, which were sacrificed to the god Xipe, in the preceding month, were carried in procession to a temple called *Jopico*, which was within the inclosure of the greater temple, and there deposited in a cave. In this same month the *Xochimanqui*, or those who traded in flowers, celebrated the festival of their goddess Coatlicue, and presented her garlands of flowers curiously woven. But before this offering was made, no person was allowed to smell these flowers. The ministers of the temples watched every night of this month, and on that account made great fires; hence the month took the name of *Tozoztonli*, or little watch.

The fourth month was called *Hueitozotli*, or great watch; because, during this month, not only the priests, but also the nobility and populace, kept watch. They drew blood from their ears, eyebrows, nose, tongue, arms, and thighs, to expiate the faults committed by their senses, and exposed at their doors leaves of the sword-grass, coloured with blood, but with no other intention, probably, than to make ostentation of their penance. In this manner they prepared themselves for the festival of the goddess Centeotl, which was celebrated with sacrifices of human victims and animals, particularly of quails, and with many warlike exercises, which they performed before the temple of this goddess. Little girls carried ears of maize to the temple, and after offering them to that false divinity, carried them to granaries, in order that these ears, thus hallowed, might preserve all the rest of the grain from any destructive insect. This month commenced on the 27th of April.

The

The fifth month, which began upon the 17th of May, was almost wholly festival. The first, which was one of the four principal festivals of the Mexicans, was that which they made in honour of their great god Tezcatlipoca. Ten days before it a priest dressed himself in the same habit and badges which distinguished that god, and went out of the temple with a bunch of flowers in his hands, and a little flute of clay which made a very shrill sound. Turning his face first towards the east, and afterwards to the other three principal winds, he sounded the flute loudly, and then taking up a little dust from the earth with his finger, he put it to his mouth and swallowed it. Upon hearing the sound of the flute, all kneeled down; criminals were thrown into the utmost terror and consternation, and with tears implored that god to grant a pardon to their transgressions, and hinder them from being discovered and detected; warriors prayed to him for courage and strength against the enemies of the nation, successful victories, and a multitude of prisoners for sacrifices; and all the rest of the people, using the same ceremony of taking up and eating the dust, supplicated with fervour the clemency of the gods. The sound of the little flute was repeated every day until the festival. One day before it, the lords carried a new habit to the idol, which the priests immediately put upon it, and kept the old one as a relique in some repository of the temple; they adorned the idol with particular ensigns of gold and beautiful feathers, and raised up the tapestry, which always covered the entrance of the sanctuary, that the image of their god might be seen and adored by the multitude. When the day of the festival arrived, the people flocked to the lower area of the temple. Some priests painted black, and dressed in a similar habit with the idol, carried it aloft upon a litter, which the youths and virgins of the temple, bound with thick cords of wreaths of crisp maize, and put one of these wreaths round the neck, and a garland on the head of the idol. This cord, the emblem of drought, which they desired to prevent, was called *Toxcatl*, which name was likewise given to the month on account of this ceremony. All the youths and virgins of the temple, as well as the nobles of the court, carried similar wreaths about their necks and in their hands. Then followed a procession through the lower area of the temple, where flowers and odoriferous herbs were



BOOK IV. scattered; two priests offered incense to the idol, which two others carried upon their shoulders. In the mean while the people kept kneeling, striking their backs with thick knotted cords. When the procession finished, and also their discipline, they carried back the idol to the altar, and made abundant offerings to it of gold, gems, flowers, feathers, animals, and provisions, which were prepared by the virgins and other women, who, on account of some particular vow, assisted for that day in the service of the temple. These provisions were carried in procession by the same virgins, who were led by a respectable priest, dressed in a strange fantastical habit, and lastly the youths carried them to the habitations of the priests for whom they had been prepared.

Afterwards they made the sacrifice of the victim representing the god Tezcatlipoca. This victim was the handsomest and best shaped youth of all the prisoners. They selected him a year before the festival, and during that whole time he was always dressed in a similar habit with the idol; he was permitted to go round the city, but always accompanied by a strong guard, and was adored every where, as the living image of that supreme divinity. Twenty days before the festival, this youth married four beautiful girls, and on the five days preceding the festival, they gave him sumptuous entertainments, and allowed him all the pleasures of life. On the day of the festival, they led him with a numerous attendance to the temple of Tezcatlipoca, but before they came there they dismissed his wives. He accompanied the idol in the procession, and when the hour of sacrifice was come, they stretched him upon the altar, and the high priest with great reverence opened his breast and pulled out his heart. His body was not, like the bodies of other victims, thrown down the stairs, but carried in the arms of the priests and beheaded at the bottom of the temple. His head was strung up in the *Tzompantli*, among the rest of the skulls of the victims which were sacrificed to Tezcatlipoca, and his legs and arms were dressed and prepared for the tables of the lords. After the sacrifice, a grand dance took place of the collegiate youths and nobles who were present at the festival. At sun-set, the virgins of the temple made a new offering of bread baked with honey. This bread, with some other things unknown to us, was put before the altar of Tezcatlipoca, and

and was destined to be the reward of the youths who should be the victors in the race which they made down the stairs of the temple; they were also rewarded with a garment, and received the praise and applause of the priests as well as the people who were spectators. The festival was concluded by dismissing from the seminaries all the youths and virgins who were arrived at an age fit for marriage. The youths who remained, mocked the others with satirical and humorous raillery, and threw at them handfuls of rushes and other things, upbraiding them with leaving the service of god for the pleasures of matrimony; the priests always granting them indulgence in this emanation of youthful vivacity.

In this same fifth month, the first festival of Huitzilopochtli was celebrated. The priests made a statue of this god of the regular stature of a man; they made the flesh of a heap of *Tzobualli*, which is a certain eatable plant, and the bones of the wood *Mizquitl*. They dressed it in cotton with a mantle of feathers; put on its head a small parasol of paper, adorned with beautiful feathers, and above that a bloody little knife of flint-stone, upon its breast a plate of gold, and on its garment were several figures representing bones of the dead, and the image of a man torn in pieces; by which they intended to signify either the power of this god in battle, or the terrible revenge, which, according to their mythology, he took against those who conspired against the honour and life of his mother. They put this statue in a litter made on four wooden serpents, which four principal officers of the Mexican army bore from the place where the statue was formed, into the altar where it was placed. Several youths forming a circle, and joining themselves together by means of arrows, which they laid hold of with their hands, the one by the head, the other by the point, carried before the litter a piece of paper more than fifteen perches long, on which, probably, the glorious actions of that false divinity were represented, and which they sung to the sound of musical instruments.

When the day of the festival was arrived, in the morning they made a great sacrifice of quails, which after their heads were twisted off, they threw at the foot of the altar. The first who made this sacrifice was the king, after him the priests, and lastly, the people. Of this great profusion

SECT.  
XXXII.  
The grand  
festival of  
Huitzilo-  
pochtli.



BOOK VI. fusion of quails, one part was dressed for the king's table, and those of the priests, and the remainder was reserved for another occasion. Every person who was present at the festival, carried a clay censer, and a quantity of bitumen of Judea, to burn in offering to their god, and all the coal which was made use of was afterwards collected in a large stove called *Tlexiſtli*. On account of this ceremony they called this festival the *incensing of Huitzilopochtli*. Immediately after followed the dance of the virgins and priests. The virgins dyed their faces, their arms were adorned with red feathers, on their heads they wore garlands of crisp leaves of maize, and in their hands they bore canes which were cleft, with little flags of cotton or paper in them. The faces of the priests were dyed black, their foreheads bound with little shields of paper, and their lips daubed with honey, they covered their natural parts with paper, and each held a sceptre, at the extremity of which was a flower made of feathers, and above that another tuft of feathers. Upon the edge of the stove two men danced, bearing on their backs certain cages of pine. The priests in the course of their dancing, from time to time, touched the earth with the extremity of their sceptres, as if they rested themselves upon them. All these ceremonies had their particular signification, and the dance on account of the festival at which it took place was called *Toxcatlchobolla*. In another separate place, the court and military people danced. The musical instruments, which in some dances were placed in the centre, on this occasion were kept without and hid, so that the sound of them was heard but the musicians were unseen.

One year before this festival, the prisoner who was to be sacrificed to Huitzilopochtli, to which prisoner they gave the name of *Ixteocale*, which signifies, *Wife Lord of Heaven*, was selected along with the victim for Tezcatlipoca. Both of them rambled about the whole year; with this difference however, that the victim of Tezcatlipoca was adored, but not that of Huitzilopochtli. When the day of the festival was arrived, they dressed the prisoner in a curious habit of painted paper, and put on his head a mitre made of the feathers of an eagle, with a plume upon the top of it. He carried upon his back a small net, and over it a little bag, and in this dress he mingled himself in the dance of the courtiers. The most singular thing respecting this prisoner

was,

was, that although he was doomed to die on that day, yet he had the liberty of fixing the hour of the sacrifice himself. Whenever he chose he presented himself to the priests, in whose arms, and not upon the altar, the sacrificer broke his breast, and pulled out his heart. When the sacrifice was ended, the priests began a great dance, which continued all the remainder of the day, excepting some intervals, which they employed to repeat the incense-offerings. At this same festival, the priests made a slight cut on the breast and on the belly of all the children of both sexes which were born within one preceding year. This was the sign or character, by which the Mexican nation specially acknowledged itself consecrated to the worship of its protecting god; and this is also the reason why several authors have believed, that the rite of circumcision was established among the Mexicans (*e*). But if possibly the people of Yucatan and the Totonacas

(*e*) F. Acoſta ſays, that “i Meſſicani ſacrificavano ne’lor fanciulli e l’orechie e il membro genitale nel che in qualche maniera contra facevano la circonciſione de’ Giudei.” But if this author ſpeaks of the true Mexicans, that is, the deſcendants of the ancient Aztecas who founded the city of Mexico, whoſe hiſtory we write, his aſſertion is abſolutely falſe; for after the moſt diligent ſearch and enquiry, there is not the ſmalleſt veſtige of ſuch a rite to be found among them. If he ſpeaks of the Totonacas, who, by having been ſubjects of the king of Mexico, are, by ſeveral authors, called Mexicans, it is true, that they made ſuch an incision on children.

The indecent and lying author of the work, entitled, “*Recherches Philoſophiques ſur les Americains*,” adopts the account given by Acoſta, and makes a long diſcourſe on the origin of circumciſion, which he believes to have been invented by the Egyptians, or the Ethiopians, to preſerve themſelves, as he ſays, from worms, which trouble inhabitants of the torrid zone who are not circumciſed. He aſſirms, that the Hebrews learned it from the Egyptians, and that at firſt it was a mere phyſical remedy, but was afterwards by fanaticiſm conſtituted a religious ceremony: that the heat of the torrid zone is the cauſe of this diſorder, and that the Mexicans, and other nations of America, in order to free themſelves from it, adopted circumciſion. But leaving aſide the falſeneſs of his principles, and his fondneſs to diſcuſs minutely every ſubject which has any connexion with obſcene pleaſures, that we may attend to that only which concerns our hiſtory, we aſſert that no traces of the practice of circumciſion have ever been found among the Mexicans, or among the nations ſubjected by them, except the Totonacas; nor did we ever hear of any ſuch diſtemper of worms in theſe countries, though they are all ſituated under the torrid zone, and we viſited for thirteen years all kinds of ſick perſons. Beſides, if heat is the cauſe of ſuch a diſtemper, it ought to have been more frequent in the native country of that author than in the inland provinces of Mexico, where the climate is more temperate. M. Maller, who is quoted by the ſame author, made no leſs a miſtake; in his Diſcourſe on Circumciſion, inſerted in the Encyclopedia, he, from not having underſtood the expreſſions of Acoſta, believed that they cut the ears and the parts of generation, of all the Mexican children entirely off; in wonder at which he aſks, if it was poſſible that many of them could remain alive after ſo cruel an operation? But if we had believed what M. Maller believed, we would rather have aſked how there came to be any Mexicans



## BOOK VI.

SECT.  
XXXIII.  
The festivals  
of the sixth,  
seventh,  
eighth, and  
ninth  
months.

nacas used this rite, it was never practised by the Mexicans, or any other nation of the empire.

In the sixth month, which began upon the sixth of June, the third festival of the god Tlaloc was celebrated. They strewed the temple in a curious manner with rushes from the lake of Citlaltepec. The priests who went to fetch them, committed various hostilities upon all passengers whom they met in their way, plundering them of every thing they had about them, and sometimes even stripping them quite naked, and beating them if they made any resistance. With such impunity were these priests, turned assassins, favoured, that they not only robbed the common people, but even carried off the royal tributes from the collectors of them, if they chanced to meet with them, no private persons being allowed to make complaint against them, nor the king to punish them for such enormities. On the day of the festival, they all eat a certain kind of gruel which they called *Etsalli*, from which the month took the name of *Etzalqualiztli*. They carried to the temple a vast quantity of painted paper and elastic gum, with which they besmeared the paper and the cheeks of the idol. After this ridiculous ceremony, they sacrificed several prisoners who were clothed in habits the same with that of the god Tlaloc, and his companions, and in order to complete the scene of their cruelty, the priests, attended by a great croud of people, went in vessels to a certain place of the lake, where in former times there was a whirlpool, and there sacrificed two children of both sexes, by drowning them, along with the hearts of the prisoners who had been sacrificed at this festival, in order to obtain from their gods the necessary rains for their fields. Upon this occasion, those ministers of the temple, who, in the course of that year, had either been negligent in office, or convicted of some high misdemeanor which was not, however, deserving of capital punishment, were stripped of their priesthood, and received a chastisement similar to the trick which is practised on seamen the first time they pass the

cans at all in the world? That no future mistakes may be committed by those who read the ancient Spanish historians of America, it is necessary to be observed, that when these historians say that the Mexicans, or other nations *sacrificed* the tongue, the ears, or any other member of the body, all they mean by it is, that they made some slight incision in these members, and drew some blood from them.

line, but more severe, as by being repeatedly ducked in the water they were at last so exhausted, it became necessary to carry them home to their houses to be recovered. BOOK VI.

In the seventh month, which began upon the 26th of June, the festival of Huixtocihuatl, the goddess of salt, was celebrated. A day before the festival there was a great dance of women, who danced in a circle, joined to each other by strings or cords of different flowers, and wearing garlands of wormwood on their heads. A female prisoner, clothed in the habit of the idol of that goddess, was placed in the centre of the circle. The dancing was accompanied with singing, in both of which two old respectable priests took the lead. This dance continued the whole night, and in the morning after, the dance of the priests began, and lasted the whole day, without any other interruption than the sacrifice of prisoners. The priests wore decent garments, and held in their hands those beautiful yellow flowers which the Mexicans called *Cempoalxochitl*, and many Europeans *Indian Carnations*; at sun-set they made the sacrifice of the female prisoner, and concluded the festival with sumptuous banquets.

During the whole of this month the Mexicans made great rejoicings. They wore their best dresses; dances and amusements in their gardens were frequent; the poems which they sang were all on love, or some other equally pleasing subject. The populace went a hunting in the mountains, and the nobles used warlike exercises in the field, and sometimes in vessels upon the lake. These rejoicings of the nobility procured to this month the name of *Tecuilbuitl*, the festival of the lords, or of *Tecuilbuitontli*, the small festival of the lords, as it was truly so, in comparison of the festival of the following month.

In the eighth month, which began upon the 16th day of July, they made a solemn festival to the goddess *Centeotl*, under the name of *Xilonen*; for as we have already mentioned, they changed the name according to the state of the maize. On this festival they called her *Xilonen*; because the ear of maize, while the grain was still tender, was called *Xilotl*. The festival continued eight days, during which there was constant dancing in the temple of that goddess. On such days, the king and the nobles gave away meat and drink to the populace, both of which were placed in rows in the under area of the temple, and there



BOOK VI. the *Chiampinolli*, which was one of their most common drinks, was given, and also the *Tamalli*, which was paste of maize, made into small rolls, and also other provisions, of which we shall treat hereafter. Presents were made to the priests, and the nobles invited each other reciprocally to entertainments, and presented each other with gold, silver, beautiful feathers, and curious animals. They sung the glorious actions of their ancestors, and boasted of the nobleness and antiquity of their families. At sun-set, when the feasting of the populace was ended, the priests had their dance which continued four hours, and on that account there was a splendid illumination in the temple. The last day was celebrated with the dance of the nobility and the military, among whom danced also a female prisoner, who represented that goddess, and was sacrificed after the dance along with the other prisoners. Thus the festival, as well as the month, had the name of *Hueitecuilibuitl*, that is, the great festival of the lords.

In the ninth month, which began on the 5th of August, the second festival of Huitzilopochtli was kept; on which, besides the usual ceremonies, they adorned all the idols with flowers; not only those which were worshipped in the temples, but likewise those which they had for private devotion in their houses; from whence the month was called *Tlaxochimaco*. The night preceding the festival was employed in preparing the meats which they eat next day with the greatest jubilee. The nobles of both sexes danced together, the arms of the one resting on the shoulders of the other. This dance, which lasted until the evening, finished with the sacrifice of some prisoners. In this month also the festival of Jacateuctli, the god of commerce, was held, accompanied with sacrifices.

SECT.  
XXXIV.  
Festivals of  
the tenth, eleventh,  
twelfth, and  
thirteenth  
months.

In the tenth month, the beginning of which was on the 25th of August, they kept the festival of *Xiuh-teuctli*, god of fire. In the preceding months, the priests brought out of the woods a large tree, which they fixed in the under area of the temple. The day before the festival they stripped off its branches and bark, and adorned it with painted paper, and from that time it was revered as the image of *Xiuh-teuctli*. The owners of the prisoners which were to be sacrificed on this occasion, dyed their bodies with red ochre, to resemble in some measure the colour of fire, and were dressed in their best garments.

They

They went to the temple, accompanied by their prisoners, and passed the whole night in singing and dancing with them. The day of the festival being arrived, and also the hour of the sacrifice, they tied the hands and feet of the victims, and sprinkled the powder of *Jaubtli* (f) in their faces, in order to deaden their senses, that their torments might be less painful. Then they began the dance, each with his victim upon his back, and one after the other threw them into a large fire kindled in the area, from which they soon after drew them with hooks of wood, to complete the sacrifice upon the altar in the ordinary way. The Mexicans gave to this month the name of *Xocobuetzi*, which signifies the maturity of the fruits. The Tlascalans called the ninth month *Miccailbuitl*, or the festival of the dead; because in it they made oblations for the souls of the deceased; and the tenth month *Hueimiccailbuitl*, or the grand festival of the dead; because in that they wore mourning, and made lamentation for the death of their ancestors.

Five days before the commencement of the eleventh month, which began on the 14th of September, all festivals ceased. During the first eight days of the month, was a dance, but without music or singing; every one directing his movements according to his own pleasure. After this period was elapsed, they clothed a female prisoner in the habit of Teteoinan, or the mother of the gods, whose festival was celebrating; the prisoner was attended by many women, and particularly by the midwives, who for four whole days employed themselves to amuse and comfort her. When the principal day of the festival was arrived, they led this woman to the upper area of the temple of that goddess, where they sacrificed her; but this was not performed in the usual mode, nor upon the common altar where other victims were sacrificed, for they beheaded her upon the shoulders of another woman, and stripped her skin off, which a youth, with a numerous attendance, carried to present to the idol of Huitzilopochtli, in memory of the inhuman sacrifice which their ancestors had made of the princess

(f) The *Jaubtli* is a plant whose stem is about a cubit long, its leaves are similar to those of the willow, but indented, its flowers are yellow and the roots thin. The flowers, as well as the other parts of the plant, have the same smell and taste as those of the anise. It is very useful in medicine, and the Mexican physicians applied it in different distempers; it was also made use of for many superstitious ends.



## BOOK VI.

of Colhuacan ; but before it was presented, they sacrificed in the usual mode four prisoners, in memory, as is probable, of the four Xochimilcan prisoners which they had sacrificed during their captivity in Colhuacan. In this month they made a review of their troops, and enlisted those youths who were destined to the profession of arms, and who, in future were to serve in war when there should be occasion. All the nobles and the populace swept the temples, on which account this month took the name of *Ochpanixtli*, which signifies, *a sweeping*. They cleaned and mended the streets, and repaired the aqueducts and their houses, all which labours were attended with many superstitious rites.

In the twelfth month, which began upon the 4th of October, they celebrated the festival of the arrival of the gods, which they expressed by the word *Teotleco*, which name also they gave to both the month and the festival. On the 16th day of this month, they covered all the temples, and the corner stones of the streets of the city with green branches. On the 18th, the gods, according to their accounts, began to arrive, the first of whom was the great god Tezcatlipoca. They spread before the door of the sanctuary of this god a mat made of the palm-tree, and sprinkled upon it some powder of maize. The high-priest stood in watch all the preceding night, and went frequently to look at the mat, and as soon as he discovered any footsteps upon the powder, which had been trod upon, no doubt, by some other deceitful priest, he began to cry out, “ *Our great god is now arrived.*” All the other priests, with a great croud of people, repaired there to adore him, and celebrate his arrival with hymns and dances, which were repeated all the rest of the night. On the two days following, other gods successively arrived, and on the twentieth and last day, when they believed that all their gods were come, a number of youths dressed in the form of various monsters, danced around a large fire, into which, from time to time, they threw prisoners, who were there consumed as burnt sacrifices. At sun-set they made great entertainments, at which they drank more than usual, imagining, that the wine with which they filled their bellies, would serve to wash the feet of their gods. To such excesses did the barbarous superstition of those people lead ! Nor was the ceremony which they practised, in order to preserve their children

children from the evil which they dreaded from one of their gods, lest extravagant : this was the custom of sticking a number of feathers on their shoulders, their arms, and legs, by means of turpentine.

In the thirteenth month, which began on the 24th of October, the festival of the gods of water and the mountains, was celebrated. The name *Tepciltli*, which was given to this month, signified only the festival of the mountains. They made little mountains of paper, on which they placed some little serpents made of wood, or of roots of trees, and certain small idols called *Ehecatotontin*, covered with a particular paste. They put both upon the altars and worshipped them, as the images of the gods of the mountains, sung hymns to them, and presented copal and meats to them. The prisoners who were sacrificed at this festival were five in number, one man and four women ; to each of which a particular name was given, alluding, probably, to some mystery of which we are ignorant. They clothed them in painted paper, which was besmeared with elastic gum, and carried them in procession in litters, after which they sacrificed them in the usual manner.

In the fourteenth month, which commenced on the 13th of November, was the festival of Mixcoatl, goddess of the chace. It was preceded by four days of rigid and general fasting, accompanied with the effusion of blood, during which time they made arrows and darts for the supply of their arsenals, and also certain small arrows which they placed together with pieces of pine, and some meats, upon the tombs of their relations, and after one day burned them. When the fast was over, the inhabitants of Mexico and Tlatelolco went out to a general chace in one of the neighbouring mountains, and all the animals which they caught were brought, with great rejoicings to Mexico, where they were sacrificed to Mixcoatl ; the king himself was present not only at the sacrifice, but likewise at the chace. They gave to this month the name of *Quechollli*, because at this season the beautiful bird which went amongst them by that name, and by many called *flamingo*, made its appearance on the banks of the Mexican lake.

SECT.  
XXXV.  
The festivals  
of the five last  
months.

In the fifteenth month, the beginning of which was on the 3d day of December, the third and principal festival of Huitzilopochtli and his brother, was celebrated. On the first day of the month, the priests formed two statues of those two gods, of different seeds pasted together,



BOOK VI. ther, with the blood of children that had been sacrificed, in which in the place of bones they substituted pieces of the wood of acacia. They placed these statues upon the principal altar of the temple, and during the whole of that night the priests kept watch. The day following, they gave their benediction to the statues, and also to a small quantity of water which was preserved in the temple for the purpose of being sprinkled on the face of any new king of Mexico, and of the general of their armies after their election; but the general, besides being besprinkled, was required to drink it. As soon as the statues were consecrated by this benediction, the dance of both sexes began, and continued all the month for three or four hours every day. During the whole of the month a great deal of blood was shed; and four days before the festival, the masters of the prisoners which were to be sacrificed, and which were selected for the occasion, observed a fast, and had their bodies painted of various colours. In the morning of the twentieth day, on which the festival was held, a grand and solemn procession was made. A priest bearing a serpent of wood, which he raised high up in his hands, called *Expamitl*, and which was the badge of the gods of war, went first, with another priest bearing a standard, such as they used in their armies. After them came a third priest, who carried the statue of the god Painalton, the vicar of Huitzilopochtli. Then came the victims after the other priests, and lastly, the people. The procession set out from the greater temple, towards the district of *Teotlachco*, where it stopped, while two prisoners of war, and some purchased slaves, were sacrificed; they proceeded next to Tlatelolco, Popotla, and Chapoltepec, from whence they returned to the city, and after having passed through other districts, re-entered the temple.

This circuit of nine or ten miles, which they performed, consumed the greatest part of the day, and at all the places where they stopped, they sacrificed quails, and, probably, some prisoners also. When they arrived at the temple, they placed the statue of Painalton, and the standard, upon the altar of Huitzilopochtli; the king offered incense to the two statues of seeds, and then ordered another procession to be made round the temple, at the conclusion of which they sacrificed the rest of the prisoners and slaves. These sacrifices were made at the close of day. That night the priests kept watch, and the next morning they carried

carried the statue in paste of Huitzilopochtli to a great hall, which was within the precincts of the temple, and there in the presence only of the king, four principal priests, and four superiors of the seminaries, the priest Quetzalcoatl, who was the chief of the Tlamacazqui, or penance-doers, threw a dart at the statue, which pierced it through and through. They then said, that their god was dead. One of the principal priests cut out the heart of the statue, and gave it to the king to eat. The body was divided in two parts; one of which was given to the people of Tlatelolco, and the other to the Mexicans. The share was again divided into four parts, for the four quarters of the city, and each of these four parts into as many minute particles as there were men in each quarter. This ceremony they expressed by the word *Teocualo*, which signifies, the god to be eat. The women never tasted this sacred paste, probably, because they had no concern with the profession of arms. We are ignorant, whether or not they made the same use of the statue of Tlacahuepan. The Mexicans gave to this month the name of *Panquetzalixtli*, which signifies, the raising of the standard, alluding to the one which they carried in the above procession. In this month they employed themselves in renewing the boundaries, and repairing the inclosures of their fields.

In the sixteenth month, which began upon the 23d of December, the fifth and last festival of the gods of water, and the mountains, took place. They prepared for it with the usual austerities, by making oblations of copal and other aromatic gums. They formed little figures of the mountains, which they consecrated to those gods, and certain little idols made of the paste of various eatable seeds, of which when they had worshipped them, they opened the breasts, and cut out the hearts, with a weaver's shuttle, and afterwards cut off their heads, in imitation of the rites of the sacrifices. The body was divided by the heads of families amongst their domestics, in order that by eating them they might be preserved from certain distempers, to which those persons who were negligent of worship to those deities conceived themselves to be subject. They burned the habits in which they had dressed the small idols, and preserved the ashes with the utmost care in their oratories, and also the vessels in which the images had been formed. Besides these rites, which were usually observed in private houses, they  
made



BOOK VI. made some sacrifices of human victims in the temple. For four days preceding the festival, a strict fast was observed, accompanied with the effusion of blood. This month was called *Atemoztli*, which signifies the descent of the water, for a reason which we will immediately mention (*g*).

In the seventeenth month, which began upon the 12th of January, they celebrated the festival of the goddess *Ilamateuctli*. A female prisoner was selected to represent her, and was clothed in the habit of her idol. They made her dance alone to a tune which some old priests sung to her, and she was permitted to express her affliction at her approaching death, which, however, was esteemed a bad omen from other victims. At sun-set, on the day of the festival, the priests adorned with the ensigns of various gods, sacrificed her in the usual manner, and afterwards cut off her head, when one of the priests, taking it in his hand, began a dance, in which he was joined by the rest. The priests, during this festival, made a race down the stairs of the temple; and the following day the populace entertained themselves with a game similar to the Lupercalia of the Romans; for running through the streets, they beat all the women they met with little bags of hay. In this same month they kept the festival of *Mictlanteuctli*, god of hell, on which they made a nocturnal sacrifice of a prisoner, and also the second festival of *Jacateuctli*, god of the merchants. The name *Tititl*, which they gave to this month, signifies the constringent power of the season which the cold occasions (*h*).

In the eighteenth and last month, which began on the first of February, the second festival of the god of fire was held. On the 10th day of this month, the whole of the Mexican youth went out to the chase, not only of wild beasts in the woods, but also to catch the birds of the lake. On the sixteenth, the fire of the temple and private houses was extinguished, and they kindled it anew before the idol of that

(*g*) Martino di Leone, a Dominican, makes *Atemoztli* signify, the altar of the gods; but the name of the altar is *Teomomoztli*, not *Atemoztli*. Boturini pretends that the name is a contraction of *Ateomomoztli*, but such contractions obtained not among the Mexicans; besides the figure of this month which represents water falling obliquely upon the steps of an edifice, expresses exactly the descent of water signified by the word *Atemoztli*.

(*h*) The above author says, that *Tititl* signifies our belly; but all those who understand the Mexican language know that such a name would be a solecism.

god, which they adorned on the occasion, with gems and beautiful feathers. The hunters presented all their spoils to the priests, one part of which was consumed in burnt-offerings to their gods, and the other was sacrificed, and afterwards dressed for the tables of the nobility and priests. The women made oblations of *Tamalli*, which they afterwards distributed among the hunters. One of the ceremonies observed upon this occasion was that of boring the ears of all the children of each sex, and putting ear-rings in them. But the greatest singularity attending this festival was that not a single human victim was sacrificed at it.

They celebrated likewise in this month the second festival of the mother of the gods, respecting which, however, we know nothing except the ridiculous custom of lifting up the children by the ears into the air, from a belief that they would thereby become higher in stature. With regard to the name *Izcalli*, which they gave to this month, we are unable to give any explanation (*i*).

After the eighteen months of the Mexican year were completed on the 20th of February, upon the 21st the five days called *Nemontemi* commenced, during which days no festival was celebrated, nor any enterprise undertaken, because they were reckoned *dies infausti*, or unlucky days. The child that happened to be born on any of these days, if it was a boy, got the name of *Nemoquichtli*, useless man; if she was a girl, received the name of *Nencibuatl*, useless woman.

Among the festivals annually celebrated, the most solemn were those of *Teoxibuitl*, or divine years, of which kind were all those years which had the rabbit for their denominative character. The sacrifices were on such occasions more numerous, the oblations more abundant, and the dances more solemn, especially in Tlascala, in Huèxotzinco, and Cholula. In like manner, the festivals at the beginning of every period of thirteen years, were attended with more pomp and gravity; that is, in the years 1 *Tochtli*, 1 *Acatl*, 1 *Tecpatl*, and 1 *Calli*.

But the festival which was celebrated every fifty-two years, was by far the most splendid and most solemn, not only among the Mexicans, but

SECT.  
XXXVI.  
Secular festival.

(*i*) *Izcalli* signifies, Behold the house. The interpretations given by Torquemada and Leone are too violent.



BOOK VI. likewise among all the nations of that empire, or who were neighbouring to it. On the last night of their century, they extinguished the fire of all the temples and houses, and broke their vessels, earthen pots, and all other kitchen utensils, preparing themselves in this manner for the end of the world, which at the termination of each century they expected with terror. The priests, clothed in various dresses and ensigns of their gods, and accompanied by a vast croud of people, issued from the temple out of the city, directing their way towards the mountain *Huixachtla*, near to the city of Iztapalapan, upwards of six miles distant from the capital. They regulated their journey in some measure by observation of the stars, in order that they might arrive at the mountain a little before midnight, on the top of which the new fire was to be kindled. In the mean while, the people remained in the utmost suspense and solicitude, hoping on the one hand to find from the new fire a new century granted to mankind, and fearing on the other hand, the total destruction of mankind, if the fire, by divine interference, should not be permitted to kindle. Husbands covered the faces of their pregnant wives with the leaves of the aloe, and shut them up in granaries; because they were afraid that they would be converted into wild beasts and would devour them. They also covered the faces of children in that way, and did not allow them to sleep, to prevent their being transformed into mice. All those who did not go out with the priests, mounted upon terraces, to observe from thence the event of the ceremony. The office of kindling the fire on this occasion belonged exclusively to a priest of *Copolco*, one of the districts of the city. The instruments for this purpose were, as we have already mentioned, two pieces of wood, and the place on which the fire was produced from them, was the breast of some brave prisoner whom they sacrificed. As soon as the fire was kindled, they all at once exclaimed with joy; and a great fire was made on the mountain that it might be seen from afar, in which they afterwards burned the victim whom they had sacrificed. Immediately they took up portions of the sacred fire, and strove with each other who should carry it most speedily to their houses. The priests carried it to the greater temple of Mexico, from whence all the inhabitants of that capital were supplied with it. During the thirteen days which followed the renewal of the fire, which

which were the intercalary days, interposed between the past and ensuing century to adjust the year with the course of the sun, they employed themselves in repairing and whitening the public and private buildings, and in furnishing themselves with new dresses and domestic utensils, in order that every thing might be new, or at least appear to be so, upon the commencement of the new century. On the first day of that year, and of that century, which as we have already mentioned, corresponded to the 26th of February, for no person was it lawful to taste water before mid-day. At that hour the sacrifices began, the number of which was suited to the grandeur of the festival. Every place resounded with the voice of gladness and mutual congratulations on account of the new century which heaven had granted to them. The illuminations made during the first nights were extremely magnificent; their ornaments of dress, their entertainments, dances, and public games, were superiorly solemn. Amongst the last, amidst an immense concourse of people, and the most lively demonstrations of joy, the game of the flyers, which we shall describe in another place, was exhibited; in which the number of flyers were four, and the number of turns which each made in his flight, thirteen, which signified the four periods of thirteen years, of which the century was composed.

What we have hitherto related concerning the festivals of the Mexicans, clearly evinces their superstitious character; but it will appear still more evident from the account we are now to give of the rites which they observed upon the birth of children, at their marriages, and at funerals.

As soon as a child was born, the midwife, after cutting the navel-string, and burying the secundine, bathed it, saying these words; *Receive the water; for the goddess Chalchiuhcueje is thy mother. May this bath cleanse the spots which thou bearest from the womb of thy mother, purify thy heart and give thee a good and perfect life.* Then addressing her prayer to that goddess, she demanded in similar words the same favour from her; and taking up the water again with her right hand, she blew upon it, and wet the mouth, head, and breast of the child with it, and after bathing the whole of its body, she said: *May the invisible God descend upon this water, and cleanse thee of every sin*

SEC  
XXXVII.  
Rites observed upon the birth of children.



## BOOK VI.

*and impurity, and free thee from evil fortune: and then turning to the child, she spoke to it thus: Lovely child, the gods Ometeuctli and Omecihuatl have created thee in the highest place of heaven, in order to send thee into the world; but know that the life on which thou art entering is sad, painful, and full of uneasiness and miseries: nor will thou be able to eat thy bread without labour: May God assist thee in the many adversities which await thee.* This ceremony was concluded with congratulations to the parents and relations of the child. If it was the son of the king, or of any great lord, the chief of his subjects came to congratulate the father, and to wish the highest prosperity to his child (k).

When the first bathing was done, the diviners were consulted concerning the fortune of the child, for which purpose they were informed of the day and hour of its birth. They considered the nature of the sign of that day, and the ruling sign of that period of thirteen days to which it belonged, and if it was born at midnight, two signs concurred, that is, the sign of the day which was just concluding, and that of the day which was just beginning. After having made their observations, they pronounced the good or bad fortune of the child. If it was bad, and if the fifth day after its birth-day, on which the second bathing was usually performed, was one of the *dies infausti*, the ceremony was postponed until a more favourable occasion. To the second bathing, which was a more solemn rite, all the relations and friends, and some young boys were invited; and if the parents were in good circumstances, they gave great entertainments, and made presents of apparel to all the guests. If the father of the child was a military person, he prepared for this ceremony a little bow, four arrows, and a little habit, resembling in make that which the child, when grown up, would wear. If he was a countryman, or an artist,

(k) In Guatemala, and other surrounding provinces, the births of male children were celebrated with much solemnity and superstition. As soon as the son was born a turkey was sacrificed. The bathing was performed in some fountain, or river, where they made oblations of copal, and sacrifices of parrots. The navel string was cut upon an ear of maize, and with a new knife, which was immediately after cast into the river. They sowed the seeds of that ear, and attended to its growth with the utmost care, as if it had been a sacred thing. What was reaped from this seed was divided into three parts; one of which was given to the diviner; of another part they made pap for the child, and the rest was preserved until the same child should be old enough to be able to sow it.

he prepared some instruments belonging to his art, proportioned in size to the infancy of the child. If the child was a girl, they furnished a little habit, suitable to her sex, a small spindle, and some other little instruments for weaving. They lighted a great number of torches, and the midwife taking up the child, carried it through all the yard of the house, and placed it upon a heap of the leaves of sword grass, close by a basin of water, which was prepared in the middle of the yard, and then undressing it, said: *My child, the gods Omemeteuctli and Omecihuatl, lords of heaven, have sent thee to this dismal and calamitous world. Receive this water which is to give thee life.* And after wetting its mouth, head, and breast, with forms similar to those of the first bathing, she bathed its whole body, and rubbing every one of its limbs, said, *Where art thou ill Fortune? In what limb art thou hid? Go far from this child.* Having spoke this, she raised up the child to offer it to the gods, praying them to adorn it with every virtue. The first prayer was offered to the two gods before named, the second to the goddesses of water, the third to all the gods together, and the fourth to the sun and the earth. *You sun, she said, father of all things that live upon the earth, our mother, receive this child, and protect him as your own son; and since he is born for war (if his father belonged to the army), may he die in it, defending the honour of the gods; so may he enjoy in heaven the delights which are prepared for all those who sacrifice their lives in so good a cause.* She then put in his little hands the instruments of that art which he was to exercise, with a prayer addressed to the protecting god of the same. The instruments of the military art were buried in some fields, where, in future, it was imagined the boy would fight in battle, and the female instruments were buried in the house itself, under the stone for grinding maize. On this same occasion, if we are to credit Boturini, they observed the ceremony of passing the boy four times through the fire.

Before they put the instruments of any art into the hands of the child, the midwife requested the young boys who had been invited, to give him a name, which was generally such a name as had been suggested to them by the father. The midwife then clothed him, and laid him in the *cozelli*, or cradle, praying Joalticiti, the goddess of cradles, to warm



BOOK VI. warm him and guard him in her bosom, and Joalteuctli, god of the night, to make him sleep.

The name which was given to boys, was generally taken from the sign of the day on which they were born (a rule particularly practised among the Mixtecas), as *Nabuixochitl*, or IV Flower, *Macuilcoatl*, or V Serpent, and *Omecalli*, or II House. At other times the name was taken from circumstances attending the birth; as for instance, one of the four chiefs who governed the republic of Tlascala, at the time of the arrival of the Spaniards, received the name of *Citlalpopoca*, smoking star; because he was born at the time of a comet's appearance in the heavens. The child born on the day of the renewal of the fire, had the name of *Molpilli*, if it was a male; if a female she was called *Xiubnenetl*, alluding in both names to circumstances attending the festival. Men had in general the names of animals; women those of flowers; in giving which, it is probable, they paid regard both to the dream of the parents, and the counsel of diviners. For the most part they gave but one name to boys; afterwards it was usual for them to acquire a surname from their actions, as Montezuma I. on account of his bravery was given the surnames of *Ilhuacamina* and *Tlacaeli*.

When the religious ceremony of bathing was over, an entertainment was given, the quality and honours of which corresponded with the rank of the giver. At such seasons of rejoicing, a little excess in drinking was permitted, as the disorderliness of drunken persons extended not beyond private houses. The torches were kept burning till they were totally consumed, and particular care was taken to keep up the fire all the four days, which intervened between the first and second ceremony of bathing, as they were persuaded that an omission of such a nature would ruin the fortune of the child. These rejoicings were repeated when they weaned the child, which they commonly did at three years of age (1).

SECT.  
XXXVIII.  
Nuptial  
rites.

With respect to the marriages of the Mexicans, although in them, as well as in all their customs, superstition had a great share, nothing, however, attended them which was repugnant to decency or honour. Any marriage between persons related in the first degree of consan-

(1) In Guatemala it was usual to make rejoicings as soon as the child began to walk, and for seven years they continued to celebrate the anniversary of its birth.

guinity or alliance, was strictly forbid, not only by the laws of Mexico, but also by the laws of Michuacan, unless it was between cousins (*m*). The parents were the persons who settled all marriages, and none were ever executed without their consent. When a son arrived at an age capable of bearing the charges of that state, which in men was from the age of twenty to twenty-two years, and in women from sixteen to eighteen, a suitable and proper wife was singled out for him; but before the union was concluded on, the diviners were consulted, who, after having considered the birth-day of the youth, and of the young girl intended for his bride, decided on the happiness or unhappiness of the match. If from the combination of signs attending their births, they pronounced the alliance unpropitious, that young maid was abandoned, and another sought. If, on the contrary, they predicted happiness to the couple, the young girl was demanded of her parents by certain women amongst them called *Cibuatlanque*, or solicitors, who were the most elderly and respectable amongst the kindred of the youth. These women went the first time at midnight to the house of the damsel, carried a present to her parents, and demanded her of them in a humble and respectful style. The first demand, was, according to the custom of that nation, infallibly refused, however advantageous and eligible the marriage might appear to the parents, who gave some plausible reasons for their refusal. After a few days were past, those women returned to repeat their demand, using prayers and arguments also, in order to obtain their request, giving an account of the rank and fortune of the youth, and of what he would make the dowry of his wife, and also gaining information of that which she could bring to the match on her part. The parents replied to this second request,

(*m*) In the ivth book, tit. 2. of the third provincial council of Mexico, it is supposed that the Gentiles of that new world married with their sisters; but it ought to be understood, that the zeal of those fathers was not confined in its exertions to the nations of the Mexican empire, amongst whom such marriages were not suffered, but extended to the barbarous Chechemecas, the Panuchese, and to other nations, which were extremely uncivilized in their customs. There is not a doubt, that the council alluded to those barbarians, who were then (in 1585), in the progress of their conversion to Christianity, and not to the Mexicans and the nations under subjection to them, who many years before the council were already converted. Besides, in the interval of four years, between the conquest of the Spaniards and the promulgation of the gospel, many abusive practices had been introduced among those nations never before tolerated under their kings, as the religious missionaries employed in their conversion attest.

that



## BOOK VI.

that it was necessary to consult their relations and connections, and to find out the inclinations of their daughter, before they could come to any resolution. These female solicitors returned no more; as the parents themselves conveyed, by means of other women of their kindred, a decisive answer to the party.

A favourable answer being at last obtained, and a day appointed for the nuptials, the parents, after exhorting their daughter to fidelity and obedience to her husband, and to such a conduct in life as would do honour to her family, conducted her with a numerous company and music, to the house of her father-in-law; if noble, she was carried in a litter. The bridegroom, and the father and mother-in-law, received her at the gate of the house, with four torches borne by four women. At meeting, the bride and bridegroom reciprocally offered incense to each other; then the bridegroom taking the bride by the hand, led her into the hall, or chamber which was prepared for the nuptials. They both sat down upon a new and curiously wrought mat, which was spread in the middle of the chamber, and close to the fire which was kept lighted. Then a priest tied a point of the *buepilli*, or gown of the bride, with the *tilmatli*, or mantle of the bridegroom, and in this ceremony the matrimonial contract chiefly consisted. The wife now made some turns round the fire, and then returning to her mat, she, along with her husband, offered copal to their gods, and exchanged presents with each other. The repast followed next. The married pair eat upon the mat, giving mouthfuls to each other alternately and to the guests in their places. When those who had been invited were become exhilarated with wine, which was freely drank on such occasions, they went out to dance in the yard of the house, while the married pair remained in the chamber, from which, during four days, they never stirred, except to obey the calls of nature, or to go to the oratory at midnight to burn incense to the idols, and to make oblations of eatables. They passed these four days in prayer and fasting, dressed in new habits, and adorned with certain ensigns of the gods of their devotion, without proceeding to any act of less decency, fearing that otherwise the punishment of heaven would fall upon them. Their beds on these nights were two mats of rushes, covered with small sheets, with certain feathers, and a gem of *Chalchibuitl* in the middle  
of

of them. At the four corners of the bed green canes and spines of the aloe were laid, with which they were to draw blood from their tongues and their ears in honour of their gods. The priests were the persons who adjusted the bed to sanctify the marriage; but we know nothing of the mystery of the canes, the feathers, and the gem. Until the fourth night the marriage was not consummated; they believed it would have proved unlucky, if they had anticipated the period of consummation. The morning after they bathed themselves and put on new dresses, and those who had been invited, adorned their heads with white, and their hands and feet with red feathers. The ceremony was concluded by making presents of dresses to the guests, which were proportioned to the circumstances of the married pair; and on that same day they carried to the temple the mats, sheets, canes, and the eatables which had been presented to the idols.

The forms which we have described, in the marriages of the Mexicans were not so universal through the empire, but that some provinces observed other peculiarities. In Ichcatlan, whoever was desirous of marrying presented himself to the priests, by whom he was conducted to the temple, where they cut off a part of his hair before the idol which was worshipped there, and then pointing him out to the people, they began to exclaim, saying, *this man wishes to take a wife*. Then they made him descend, and take the first free woman he met, as the one whom heaven destined to him. Any woman who did not like to have him for a husband, avoided coming near to the temple at that time, that she might not subject herself to the necessity of marrying him: this marriage was only singular therefore in the mode of seeking for a wife.

Among the Otomies, it was lawful to use any free woman before they married her. When any person was about to take a wife, if on the first night he found any thing about his wife which was disagreeable to him, he was permitted to divorce her the next day; but if he shewed himself all that day content with having her, he could not afterwards abandon her. The contract being thus ratified, the pair retired to do penance for past offences twenty or thirty days, during which period they abstained from most of the pleasures of the senses, drew blood from themselves, and frequently bathed.



## BOOK VI.

Among the Miztecas, besides the ceremony of tying the married pair together by the end of their garments, they cut off a part of their hair, and the husband carried his wife for a little time upon his back.

They permitted polygamy in the Mexican empire. The kings and lords had numerous wives; but it is probable, that they observed all the ceremonies with their principal wives only, and that with the rest the essential rite of tying their garments together was sufficient.

The Spanish theologists and canonists, who went to Mexico immediately after the conquest, being unacquainted with the customs of those people, raised doubts about their marriages; but when they had learnt the language, and properly examined that and other points of importance, they acknowledged such marriages to be just and lawful. Pope Paul III. and the provincial council of Mexico, ordered, in conformity to the sacred canons, and the usage of the church, that all those who were willing to embrace Christianity, should keep no other wife but the one whom they had first married.

SECT.  
XXXIX.  
Funeral rites.

However superstitious the Mexicans were in other matters, in the rites which they observed at funerals they exceeded themselves. As soon as any person died, certain masters of funeral ceremonies were called, who were generally men advanced in years. They cut a number of pieces of paper, with which they dressed the dead body, and took a glass of water with which they sprinkled the head, saying, that that was the water used in the time of their life. They then dressed it in a habit suitable to the rank, the wealth, and the circumstances attending the death of the party. If the deceased had been a warrior, they clothed him in the habit of Huitzilopochtli; if a merchant, in that of Jacatuetli; if an artist, in that of the protecting god of his art or trade: one who had been drowned was dressed in the habit of Tlaloc; one who had been executed for adultery, in that of Tlazolteotl; and a drunkard in the habit of Tezcatzoncatl, god of wine. In short, as Gomara has well observed, they wore more garments after they were dead than while they were living.

With the habit they gave the dead a jug of water, which was to serve on the journey to the other world, and also at successive different times, different pieces of paper, mentioning the use of each. On consigning the first piece to the dead, they said: *By means of this you will*

*pass*

*pass without danger between the two mountains which fight against each other.* With the second they said: *By means of this you will walk without obstruction along the road which is defended by the great serpent.* With the third: *By this you will go securely through the place, where there is the crocodile Xochitonal.* The fourth was a safe passport through the eight deserts; the fifth through the eight hills; and the sixth was given in order to pass without hurt through the sharp wind; for they pretended that it was necessary to pass a place called *Itzebecajan*, where a wind blew so violently as to tear up rocks, and so sharp that it cut like a knife; on which account they burned all the habits which the deceased had worn during life, their arms, and some household goods, in order that the heat of this fire might defend them from the cold of that terrible wind.

One of the chief and most ridiculous ceremonies at funerals was the killing a *techichi*, a domestic quadruped, which we have already mentioned, resembling a little dog, to accompany the deceased in their journey to the other world. They fixed a string about its neck, believing that necessary to enable it to pass the deep river of *Cbiubnahuapan*, or New Waters. They buried the *techichi*, or burned it along with the body of its master, according to the kind of death of which he died. While the masters of the ceremonies were lighting up the fire in which the body was to be burned, the other priests kept singing in a melancholy strain. After burning the body, they gathered the ashes in an earthen pot, amongst which, according to the circumstances of the deceased, they put a gem of more or less value; which they said would serve him in place of a heart in the other world. They buried this earthen pot in a deep ditch, and fourscore days after made oblations of bread and wine over it.

Such were the funeral rites of the common people; but at the death of kings, and that of lords, or persons of high rank, some peculiar forms were observed that are worthy to be mentioned. When the king fell sick, says Gomara, they put a mask on the idol of *Huitzilopochtli*, and also one on the idol of *Tezcatlipoca*, which they never took off until the king was either dead or recovered; but it is certain, that the idol of *Huitzilopochtli* had always two masks, not one. As soon as a king of Mexico happened to die, his death was published in great



## BOOK VI.

form, and all the lords who resided at court, and also those who were but a little distant from it were informed of the event, in order that they might be present at the funeral. In the mean time they laid the royal corpse upon beautiful curiously wrought mats, which was attended and watched by his domestics. Upon the fourth or fifth day after, when the lords were arrived, who brought with them rich dresses, beautiful feathers, and slaves to be presented, to add to the pomp of the funeral, they clothed the corpse in fifteen, or more, very fine habits of cotton of various colours, ornamented it with gold, silver, and gems, hung an emerald at the under lip, which was to serve in place of a heart, covered the face with a mask, and over the habits were placed the ensigns of that god, in whose temple or area the ashes were to be buried. They cut off some of the hair, which, together with some more which had been cut off in the infancy of the king, they preserved in a little box, in order to perpetuate, as they said, the memory of the deceased. Upon the box they laid an image of the deceased, made of wood, or of stone. Then they killed the slave who was his chaplain, who had had the care of his oratory, and all that belonged to the private worship of his gods, in order that he might serve him in the same office in the other world.

The funeral procession came next, accompanied by all the relations of the deceased, the whole of the nobility, and the wives of the late king, who testified their sorrow by tears and other demonstrations of grief. The nobles carried a great standard of paper, and the royal arms and ensigns. The priests continued singing, but without any musical instrument. Upon their arrival at the lower area of the temple, the high-priest, together with their servants, came out to meet the royal corpse, which, without delay, they placed upon the funeral pile, which was prepared there for that purpose of odoriferous resinous woods, together with a large quantity of copal, and other aromatic substances. While the royal corpse, and all its habits, the arms and ensigns were burning, they sacrificed at the bottom of the stairs of the temple a great number of slaves of those which belonged to the deceased, and also of those which had been presented by the lords. Along with the slaves, they likewise sacrificed some of the irregularly formed men, whom the king had collected in his palaces for his entertainment, in order that

that they might give him the same pleasure in the other world; and for the same reason they used also to sacrifice some of his wives (*n*). The number of the victims was proportioned to the grandeur of the funeral, and amounted sometimes, as several historians affirm, to two hundred. Among the other sacrifices the techichi was not omitted; they were firmly persuaded, that without such a guide it would be impossible to get through some dangerous ways which led to the other world.

The day following the ashes were gathered, and the teeth which remained entire; they sought carefully for the emerald which had been hung to the under lip, and the whole were put into the box with the hair, and they deposited the box in the place destined for his sepulchre. The four following days they made oblations of eatables over the sepulchre; on the fifth, they sacrificed some slaves, and also some others on the twentieth, fortieth, sixtieth, and eightieth day after. From that time forward, they sacrificed no more human victims; but every year they celebrated the day of the funeral with sacrifices of rabbits, butterflies, quails, and other birds, and with oblations of bread, wine, copal flowers, and certain little reeds filled with aromatic substances, which they called *acajetl*. This anniversary was held for four years.

The bodies of the dead were in general burned; they buried the bodies entire of those only who had been drowned, or had died of dropsy, and some other diseases; but what was the reason of these exceptions we know not.

There was no fixed place for burials. Many ordered their ashes to be buried near to some temple or altar, some in the fields, and others in those sacred places of the mountains where sacrifices used to be made. The ashes of the kings and lords, were, for the most part, deposited in the towers of the temples (*o*), especially in those of the

SECT. XL.  
Their sepulchres.

(*n*) Acosta says (lib. v. cap. 8.) that at the funerals of lords, all the members of his family were sacrificed. But this is grossly false and in itself incredible; for had this been the case, the nobles of Mexico would have soon been exterminated. There is no record in the History of Mexico, that at the death of the king of Mexico, any of his brothers were sacrificed, as this author would intimate. How is it possible they could practise such cruelty when the new king was usually elected from among the brothers of the deceased.

(*o*) Solis, in his History of the Conquest of Mexico, affirms, that the ashes of the kings were deposited in Chapultepec; but this is false, and contradicts the report of the conqueror Cortes, whose panegyric he wrote, of Bernal Dias, and other eye-witnesses of the contrary.

greater



BOOK VI. greater temple. Close to Teotihuacan, where there were many temples, there were also innumerable sepulchres. The tombs of those whose bodies had been buried entire, agreeable to the testimony of the anonymous conqueror who saw them, were deep ditches, formed with stone and lime, within which they placed the bodies in a fitting posture upon *icpalli*, or low seats, together with the instruments of their art or profession. If it was the sepulchre of any military person, they laid a shield and sword by him; if of a woman, a spindle, a weaver's shuttle, and a *xicalli*, which was a certain naturally formed vessel, of which we shall say more hereafter. In the tombs of the rich they put gold and jewels, but all were provided with eatables for the long journey which they had to make. The Spanish conquerors, knowing of the gold which was buried with the Mexican lords in their tombs, dug up several, and found considerable quantities of that precious metal. Cortes say in his letters, that at one entry which he made into the capital, when it was besieged by his army, his soldiers found fifteen hundred *Castellanos* (*p*), that is, two hundred and forty ounces of gold, in one sepulchre, which was in the tower of a temple. The anonymous conqueror says also, that he was present at the digging up of another sepulchre, from which they took about three thousand Castellanos.

The caves of the mountains were the sepulchres of the ancient Chechemecas; but, as they grew more civilized, they adopted in this and other rites, the customs of the Acolhuan nation, which were nearly the same with those of the Mexicans.

The Miztecas retained in part the ancient usage of the Chechemecas, but in some things they were singular in their customs. When any of their lords fell sick, they offered prayers, vows, and sacrifices for the recovery of his health. If it was restored, they made great rejoicings. If he died, they continued to speak of him as if he was still alive, and conducted one of his slaves to the corpse, dressed him in the habits of his master, put a mask upon his face, and for one whole day, paid him all the honours which they had used to render to

(*p*) The Spanish goldsmiths divide the pound weight of gold into two *Marchi*, or into sixteen ounces, or a hundred *Castellanos*; consequently, an ounce contains  $6\frac{1}{4}$  *Castellanos*.

the deceased. At midnight, four priests carried the corpse to be buried in a wood, or in some cavern, particularly in that one where they believed the gate of paradise was, and at their return they sacrificed the slave, and laid him, with all the ornaments of his transitory dignity, in a ditch ; but without covering him with earth.

Every year they held a festival in honour of their last lord, on which they celebrated his birth, not his death, for of it they never spoke.

The Zapotecas, their neighbours embalmed the body of the principal lord of their nation. Even from the time of the first Chechemecan kings aromatic preparations were in use among those nations to preserve dead bodies from speedy corruption ; but we do not know that these were very frequent.

We have now communicated all that we know concerning the religion of the Mexicans. The weakness of their worship, the superstition of their rites, the cruelty of their sacrifices, and the rigour of their austerities, will the more forcibly manifest to their descendants, the advantages which are derived from a mild, chaste, and pure religion, and will dispose them to thank eternally the Providence which has enlightened them, while their ancestors were left to perish in darkness and error.



## B O O K VII.

*The political and military Government of the Mexicans, that is, the Kings, Lords, Electors, Ambassadors, Dignities, and Magistrates; the Judges, Laws, and Punishments; the Military Force; Agriculture, Chace, Fishing, and Commerce; the Games; the Dress, Food, and Household Furniture; the Language, Poetry, Music, and Dancing; Medicine, History, and Painting; Sculpture, Mosaic Works, and Casting of Metals; Architecture, and other Arts of that Nation.*

## BOOK VII.

IN the public as well as private œconomy of the Mexicans, the traces which remain of their political discernment, of their zeal for justice, and love of the public good, would meet with little credit, were they not confirmed both by the evidence of their paintings, and the attestations of many faithful and impartial authors, who were eye-witnesses of a great part of that which they have written. Those who are weak enough to imagine they can know the ancient Mexicans in their descendants, or from the nations of Canada and Louisiana, will be apt to consider the account we are to give of their refinement, their laws, and their arts, as fables invented by the Spaniards. But that we may not violate the laws of history, nor the fidelity due to the public, we shall candidly set forth all that which we have found to be authentic, without any apprehension of censure.

The education of youth, which is the chief support of a state, and which best unfolds the character of every nation, was amongst the Mexicans of so judicious a nature as to be of itself sufficient to retort the supercilious contempt of certain critics upon themselves, who believe the empire of reason to be circumscribed to the boundaries of Europe. In whatever we say on this subject we shall be guided by the paintings of those nations, and their best informed historians.

SECT. I.  
Education of  
the Mexican  
youth.

Nothing, says F. Acoſta, has ſurprised me more, or appeared more worthy of memory and praise, than the care and method which the

Mexicans observed in the tuition of youth. It would be difficult, indeed, to find a nation that has bestowed more attention on a point so important to every state. It is true, they mixed superstition with their precepts ; but the zeal they manifested for the education of their children, upbraids the negligence of our modern fathers of families ; and many of the lessons which they taught to their youth might serve as instruction to ours. All the Mexican children, even those of the royal family, were suckled by their own parents. If the mother was prevented from doing this by sickness, she did not employ a nurse till she was well informed both of her condition in life, and the quality of her milk. They were accustomed from infancy to endure hunger, heat, and cold. When they attained five years of age, they were either consigned to the priests, in order that they might be brought up in the seminaries, which was the general practice with the children of nobles, and even with those of the kings themselves ; or if they were to be educated at home, their parents began at that period to instruct them in the worship of their gods, and to teach them the forms by which they were to pray and implore their protection. They were led frequently to the temple, that they might become attached to religion. An abhorrence of vice, a modesty of behaviour, respect to superiors, and love of fatigue, were strongly inculcated. They were even made to sleep upon a mat ; and were given no more food than the necessities of life required, nor any other clothing than that which decency demanded. When they arrived at a certain age, they were instructed in the use of arms, and if their parents belonged to the army, they were led to the wars along with them, that they might learn the military art, and to banish fear from their minds, by habituating themselves to danger. If their parents were husbandmen, or artists, they taught their children their own profession. Girls were learned to spin and weave, and obliged to bathe frequently, that they might be always healthy and cleanly, and the universal maxim was to keep the young of both sexes constantly employed.

One of the precepts most warmly inculcated to youth was, truth in their words ; and whenever a lie was detected, the lip of the delinquent was pricked with the thorns of the aloe. They tied the feet of girls who were too fond of walking abroad. The son, who



## BOOK VII.

SECT. II.  
Explanation  
of the seven  
Mexican  
paintings on  
education.

was disobedient or quarrelsome, was beat with nettles, or received punishment in some other manner proportioned, according to their judgment, with the fault he had committed.

The system of education agreeable to which the Mexicans trained up their children, and the constant attention with which they watched their actions, may be traced in the seven paintings of the collection of Mendoza, included between the numbers forty-nine and fifty-seven. In these are expressed the quantity and quality of the food, which was allowed them, the employments in which they were occupied, and the punishments by which their vices were corrected. In the fiftieth painting is represented a boy of four years, who is employed by his parents in some things that are easy to do, in order to inure him to fatigue; another of five years, who accompanies his father to market, carrying a little bundle on his back; a girl of the same age who begins to learn to spin; and another boy of six years whose father employs him to pick up the ears of maize, which happen to lie on the ground in the market-place.

In the fifty-first painting are drawn a father who teaches his son of seven years of age to fish; and a mother, who teaches her daughter of the same age to spin; some boys of eight years, who are threatened with punishment if they do not do their duty; a lad of nine years, whose father pricks several parts of his body, in order to correct his indocility of temper; and a girl of the same age, whose mother only pricks her hands; a lad and a girl of ten years, whose parents beat them with a rod, because they refuse to do that which they are ordered.

The fifty-second painting represents two lads of eleven years, who, not being amended by other punishments, are made by their fathers to receive the smoke of Chilli, or great pepper up their nose; a lad of twelve years, whose father, in order to punish him for his faults, keeps him a whole day tied upon a dunghill, and a wench of the same age whose mother makes her walk, during the night, all over the house and part of the streets; a lad of thirteen years, whose father makes him guide a little vessel laden with rushes; and a wench of the same age grinding maize by order of her mother; a youth of fourteen years employed by his father in fishing, and a young woman set to weave by her mother.

In

In the fifty-third painting, are represented two youths of fifteen years, the one consigned by his father to a priest, to be instructed in the rites of religion; the other to the *Achcaubtli*, or officer of the militia, to be instructed in the military art. The fifty-fourth, shews the youth of the seminaries employed by their superiors in sweeping the temple, and in carrying branches of trees and herbs to adorn the sanctuaries, wood for the stoves, rushes to make seats, and stones and lime to repair the temple. In this same painting, and in the fifty-fifth, the different punishments inflicted on youth, who have committed trespasses, by their superiors, are also represented. One of them pricks a youth with the spines of the aloe for having neglected his duty: two priests throw burning firebrands on the head of another youth, for having been caught in familiar discourse with a young woman. They prick the body of another with sharp pine stakes, and another for disobedience is punished by having his hair burned. Lastly, is exhibited a youth carrying the baggage of a priest, who goes along with the army to encourage the soldiers in war, and to perform certain superstitious ceremonies.

Their children were bred to stand so much in awe of their parents, that even when grown up and married, they hardly durst speak before them. In short, the instructions and advice which they received were of such a nature, that I cannot dispense with transcribing some of the exhortations employed by them, the knowledge of which was obtained from the Mexicans themselves by the first religious missionaries who were employed in their conversion, particularly Motolinia, Olmos, and Sahagun, who acquired a perfect knowledge of the Mexican language, and made the most diligent inquiry into their manners and customs.

“ My son,” said the Mexican father, “ who art come into the light  
 “ from the womb of thy mother like the chicken from the egg, and  
 “ like it art preparing to fly through the world, we know not how  
 “ long heaven will grant to us the enjoyment of that precious gem  
 “ which we possess in thee; but, however short the period, endeavour  
 “ to live exactly, praying God continually to assist thee. He created  
 “ thee; thou art his property. He is thy Father, and loves thee still  
 “ more than I do; repose in him thy thoughts, and day and night di-

SECT. III.  
 The exhortations of a Mexican to his son.



## BOOK VI.

“ rect thy sighs to him. Reverence and salute thy elders, and hold  
 “ no one in contempt. To the poor and the distressed be not dumb,  
 “ but rather use words of comfort. Honour all persons, particularly  
 “ thy parents, to whom thou owest obedience, respect, and service.  
 “ Guard against imitating the example of those wicked sons, who, like  
 “ brutes that are deprived of reason, neither reverence their parents, lis-  
 “ ten to their instruction, nor submit to their correction ; because, who-  
 “ ever follows their steps will have an unhappy end, will die in a desperate  
 “ or sudden manner, or will be killed and devoured by wild beasts.

“ Mock not, my son, the aged or the imperfect. Scorn not him  
 “ whom you see fall into some folly or transgression, nor make him re-  
 “ proaches ; but restrain thyself, and beware lest thou fall into the  
 “ same error which offends thee in another. Go not where thou art  
 “ not called, nor interfere in that which does not concern thee. En-  
 “ deavour to manifest thy good breeding in all thy words and actions.  
 “ In conversation do not lay thy hands upon another, nor speak too  
 “ much, nor interrupt or disturb another’s discourse. If thou hearest  
 “ any one talking foolishly, and it is not thy business to correct him,  
 “ keep silence ; but if it does concern thee, consider first what thou art  
 “ to say, and do not speak arrogantly, that thy correction may be well  
 “ received.

“ When any one discourses with thee, hear him attentively, and  
 “ hold thyself in an easy attitude ; neither playing with thy feet, nor  
 “ putting thy mantle to thy mouth, nor spitting too often, nor look-  
 “ ing about you here and there, nor rising up frequently if thou art  
 “ sitting ; for such actions are indications of levity and low-breeding.

“ When thou art at table do not eat voraciously, nor shew thy dis-  
 “ pleasure if any thing displeases thee. If any one comes unexpectedly  
 “ to dinner with thee, share with him what thou hast ; and when any  
 “ person is entertained by thee, do not fix thy looks upon him.

“ In walking, look where thou goest, that thou mayst not push a-  
 “ gainst any one. If thou seest another coming thy way, go a little  
 “ aside to give him room to pass. Never step before thy elders, un-  
 “ less it be necessary, or that they order thee to do so. When thou  
 “ sittest at table with them, do not eat or drink before them, but attend  
 “ to them in a becoming manner, that thou mayst merit their favour.

“ When

“ When they give thee any thing, accept it with tokens of grati-  
 tude : if the present is great, do not become vain or fond of it. If  
 the gift is small do not despise it, nor be provoked, nor occasion dis-  
 pleasure to them who favour thee. If thou becomest rich, do not  
 grow insolent, nor scorn the poor ; for those very gods who deny  
 riches to others in order to give them to thee, offended by thy pride,  
 will take them from thee again to give to others. Support thy-  
 self by thy own labours ; for then thy food will be sweeter. I, my  
 son, have supported thee hitherto with my sweat, and have omitted  
 no duty of a father ; I have provided thee with every thing neces-  
 sary, without taking it from others. Do thou so likewise.

“ Never tell a falsehood ; because a lie is a heinous sin. When it  
 is necessary to communicate to another what has been imparted to  
 thee, tell the simple truth without any addition. Speak ill of no-  
 body. Do not take notice of the failings which thou observeest in  
 others, if thou art not called upon to correct them. Be not a news-  
 carrier, nor a sower of discord. When thou bearest any embassy, and  
 he to whom it is borne is enraged, and speaks contemptuously of those  
 who sent thee, do not report such an answer, but endeavour to sof-  
 ten him, and dissemble as much as possible that which thou heardest,  
 that thou mayest not raise discord and spread calumny of which  
 thou mayest afterwards repent.

“ Stay no longer than is necessary in the market-place ; for in such  
 places there is the greatest danger of contracting vices.

“ When thou art offered an employment, imagine that the proposal  
 is made to try thee ; then accept it not hastily, although thou knowest  
 thyself more fit than others to exercise it ; but excuse thyself until  
 thou art obliged to accept it ; thus thou wilt be more esteemed.

“ Be not dissolute ; because thou wilt thereby incense the gods, and  
 they will cover thee with infamy. Restrain thyself, my son, as thou  
 art yet young, and wait until the girl, whom the gods destine for  
 thy wife, arrive at a suitable age : leave that to their care, as they  
 know how to order every thing properly. When the time for thy  
 marriage is come, dare not to make it without the consent of thy  
 parents, otherwise it will have an unhappy issue.

“ Steal not, nor give thyself up to gaming ; otherwise thou wilt be  
 a disgrace to thy parents, whom thou ought rather to honour for  
 “ the



BOOK VII. “ the education they have given thee. If thou wilt be virtuous, thy  
 “ example will put the wicked to shame. No more, my son; enough  
 “ has been said in discharge of the duties of a father. With these  
 “ counsels I wish to fortify thy mind. Refuse them not, nor act in  
 “ contradiction to them; for on them thy life, and all thy happiness,  
 “ depend.”

SECT. IV.  
 Exhortation  
 of a Mexican  
 mother to her  
 daughter.

Such were the instructions which the Mexicans frequently inculcated to their sons. Husbandmen and merchants gave their sons other advice regarding their particular profession, which we, however, omit, not to prove tedious to our readers; but I cannot dispense with transcribing one of the exhortations made use of by mothers to their daughters, as it illustrates their mode of education and manners.

“ My daughter,” said the mother, “ born of my substance, brought  
 “ forth with my pains, and nourished with my milk, I have endeavoured to bring thee up with the greatest possible care, and thy  
 “ father has wrought and polished thee like an emerald, that thou  
 “ mayest appear in the eyes of men a jewel of virtue. Strive always to be good; for otherwise who will have thee for a wife? thou  
 “ wilt be rejected by every one. Life is a thorny laborious path, and  
 “ it is necessary to exert all our powers to obtain the goods which the  
 “ gods are willing to yield to us; we must not therefore be lazy or  
 “ negligent, but diligent in every thing. Be orderly and take pains  
 “ to manage the œconomy of thy house. Give water to thy husband  
 “ for his hands, and make bread for thy family. Wherever thou goest,  
 “ go with modesty and composure, without hurrying thy steps, or  
 “ laughing with those whom thou meetest, neither fixing thy looks  
 “ upon them, nor casting thy eyes thoughtlessly, first to one side,  
 “ and then to another, that thy reputation may not be sullied; but  
 “ give a courteous answer to those who salute and put any question  
 “ to thee.

“ Employ thyself diligently in spinning and weaving, in sewing and  
 “ embroidering; for by these arts thou wilt gain esteem, and all  
 “ the necessaries of food and clothing. Do not give thyself too  
 “ much to sleep, nor seek the shade, but go in the open air and there  
 “ repose thyself; for effeminacy brings along with it idleness and  
 “ other vices.

“ In

“ In whatever thou doest, encourage not evil thoughts ; but attend solely to the service of the gods ; and the giving comfort to thy parents. If thy father or thy mother calls thee, do not stay to be called twice ; but go instantly to know their pleasure, that thou mayst not disoblige them by slowness. Return no insolent answers, nor shew any want of compliance ; but if thou canst not do what they command, make a modest excuse. If another is called and does not come quickly ; come thou, hear what is ordered, and do it well. Never offer thyself to do that which thou canst not do. Deceive no person, for the gods see all thy actions. Live in peace with every body, and love every one sincerely and honestly, that thou mayest be beloved by them in return..

“ Be not greedy of the goods which thou hast. If thou seest any thing presented to another, give way to no mean suspicions ; for the gods, to whom every good belongs, distribute every thing as they please. If thou wouldst avoid the displeasure of others, let none meet with it from thee.

“ Guard against improper familiarities with men ; nor yield to the guilty wishes of thy heart ; or thou wilt be the reproach of thy family, and will pollute thy mind as mud does water. Keep not company with dissolute, lying, or idle women ; otherwise they will infallibly infect thee by their example. Attend upon thy family, and do not go on slight occasions out of thy house, nor be seen wandering through the streets, or in the market-place ; for in such places thou wilt meet thy ruin. Remember that vice, like a poisonous herb, brings death to those who taste it ; and when it once harbours in the mind it is difficult to expel it. If in passing through the streets thou meetest with a forward youth who appears agreeable to thee, give him no correspondence, but dissemble and pass on. If he says any thing to thee, take no heed of him nor his words ; and if he follows thee, turn not your face about to look at him, lest that might inflame his passion more. If thou behavest so, he will soon turn and let thee proceed in peace..

“ Enter not, without some urgent motive, into another’s house, that nothing may be either said or thought injurious to thy honour ; but if thou enterest into the house of thy relations, salute them with  
“ respect



BOOK VII. “respect and do not remain idle, but immediately take up a spindle to spin, or do any other thing that occurs.

“When thou art married, respect thy husband, obey him, and diligently do what he commands thee. Avoid incurring his displeasure, nor shew thyself passionate or ill-natured; but receive him fondly to thy arms, even if he is poor and lives at thy expence. If thy husband occasions thee any disgust, let him not know thy displeasure when he commands thee to do any thing; but dissemble it at that time, and afterwards tell him with gentleness what vexed thee, that he may be won by thy mildness and offend thee no farther. Dishonour him not before others; for thou also wouldst be dishonoured. If any one comes to visit thy husband, accept the visit kindly, and shew all the civility thou canst. If thy husband is foolish, be thou discreet. If he fails in the management of wealth, admonish him of his failings; but if he is totally incapable of taking care of his estate, take that charge upon thyself, attend carefully to his possessions, and never omit to pay the workmen punctually. Take care not to lose any thing through negligence.

“Embrace, my daughter, the counsel which I give thee; I am already advanced in life, and have had sufficient dealings with the world. I am thy mother, I wish that thou mayest live well. Fix my precepts in thy heart and bowels, for then thou wilt live happy. If, by not listening to me, or by neglecting my instructions any misfortunes befall thee, the fault will be thine, and the evil also. Enough, my child. May the gods prosper thee.”

SECT. V.  
Public  
schools and  
seminaries.

Not contented with such instructions and domestic education, the Mexicans sent their children to public schools, which were close to the temples, where they were instructed for three years in religion and good customs. Besides this, almost all the inhabitants, particularly the nobles, took care to have their children brought up in the seminaries belonging to the temples, of which there were many in the cities of the Mexican empire, for boys, youths, and young women. Those of the boys and young men were governed by priests, who were solely devoted to their education; those for young women were under the direction of matrons equally respectable for their age and for their manners. No communication between the youth of both sexes was

permitted ; on the contrary, any transgression of that nature was severely punished. There were distinct seminaries for the nobles and plebeians. The young nobles were employed in offices which were rather internal, and more immediately about the sanctuary, as in sweeping the upper area of the temple, and in stirring up and attending to the fires of the stoves which were before the sanctuary. The others were employed in carrying the wood which was required for the stoves, and the stone and lime used in repairing of sacred edifices, and in other similar tasks : both were under the direction of superiors and masters, who instructed them in religion, history, painting, music, and other arts agreeable to their rank and circumstances.

The girls swept the lower area of the temple, rose three times in the night to burn copal in the stoves, prepared the meats which were daily offered to the idols, and wove different kinds of cloth. They were taught every female duty ; by which, besides banishing idleness from them which is so dangerous to the age of youth, they were habituated to domestic labours. They slept in large halls in the sight of the matrons, who governed them, and who attended to nothing more zealously than the modesty and decency of their actions. When any male or female pupil went to pay their respects to their parents, and which case happened very seldom, they were not allowed to go by themselves, but were always accompanied by other pupils and their superior. After listening for a few moments with silence and attention to the instructions and advices which their parents gave them, they returned back to the seminary. There they were detained until the time of marriage, which, as we have already mentioned, was with young men from the age of twenty to twenty-two, and with girls at eighteen or sixteen years. When this period arrived, either the young man himself requested leave of the superior to go and get himself a wife, or, what was more common, his parents demanded him for the same purpose, returning thanks first to the superior for the care he had taken of his instruction. The superior, upon the dismissal which he gave at the grand festival of Tezcatlipoca, to all the young men and women who were arrived at that age, made them a discourse, exhorting them to a perseverance in virtue, and the discharge of all the duties of the new state. The virgins educated in these seminaries were particularly sought after for wives, not only on account of their principles, but likewise of the



## BOOK VII.

skill which they acquired there in the arts belonging to their sex. The youth who when arrived at the age of twenty-two, did not marry was esteemed to have devoted himself for ever to the service of the temples, and if after such consecration of himself he repented of celibacy, and desired to marry, he became infamous for ever, and no woman would accept him for a husband. In Tlascala, those who, at the age fit for marriage, refused taking a wife were shaven, a mark of the highest dishonour with that nation.

The sons in general learned the trades of their fathers, and embraced their professions. Thus they perpetuated the arts in families to the advantage of the state. The young men who were destined to the magistracy, were conducted by their fathers to tribunals, where they heard the laws of the kingdom explained, and observed the practice and forms of judicature. In the sixtieth picture of Mendoza's collection, are represented four judges examining a cause, and behind them four young *Teteuctin*, or *Gentlemen*, who are listening to their decision. The sons of the king, and principal lords, were appointed tutors who attended to their conduct, and long before they could enter into possession of the crown, or their state, they were entrusted with the government of some city, or smaller state, that they might learn by degrees the arduous task of governing men. This was the custom as early as the time of the first Chechemecan kings; for Nopaltzin, from the time that he was crowned king of Acolhuacan, put his first-born son Tlotzin in possession of the city of Tezcuco. Cuitlahuac, the last king of Mexico, obtained the state of Ixtapalapan, and the brother of Montezuma that of Ehecatepec, before they ascended the throne of Mexico. Upon this base of education the Mexicans supported the fabric of their political system which we are now to unfold.

SECT. VI.  
The election  
of their kings.

From the time that the Mexicans, after the example of other neighbouring states, placed Acamapitzin at the head of their nation, investing him with the name, the honours, and authority of royalty, the crown of their kingdom was made elective; for which purpose they created some time after four electors, in whose judgment and decision all the suffrages of the nation were comprehended. These were four lords of the first rank of nobility, and generally of the royal blood, possessed likewise of prudence and probity adequate to the discharge of so important a function. Their office was not perpetual; their electoral power

power terminated with the first election, and new electors were immediately nominated, or the first were re-chosen by the votes of the nobility. If a deficiency happened in their number before the king died, it was supplied by a new appointment. In the time of king Itzcoatl, two other electors were added, which were the kings of Acolhuacan and Tacuba; but their title was merely honorary. They usually ratified the choice which was made by the four real electors; but we do not know that they ever interfered otherwise with the election.

That the electors might not be left too much at liberty, and in order to prevent the inconveniencies arising from parties and factions, they fixed the crown in the family of Acamapitzin; and afterwards established a law, that when the king died he should be succeeded by one of his brothers, and on failure of brothers by one of his nephews; or on failure of them by one of his cousins, leaving it in the option of the electors to chuse among the brothers, or nephews of the deceased king, the person whom they should think best qualified to govern; by means of which law, they avoided numerous inconveniencies that we have already mentioned. This law was observed from the time of their second, until the time of their last king. Huitzilihuitl, the son of Acamapitzin, was succeeded by his two brothers Chimalpopoca and Itzcoatl; Itzcoatl by his nephew Montezuma Ilhuicamina; Montezuma by his cousin Axajacatl; Axajacatl by his two brothers Tizoc and Ahuitzotl; Ahuitzotl by his nephew Montezuma II; Montezuma II. by his brother Cuitlahuatzin, to whom lastly his nephew Quauhtemotzin succeeded. This series of kings will appear more distinctly in the table of genealogy which we have subjoined.

In the election of a king no regard was paid to the right of primogeniture. At the death of Montezuma I. Axajacatl was elected in preference to his elder brothers Tizoc and Ahuitzotl.

No new king was elected until the funeral of his predecessor was celebrated with due pomp and magnificence. As soon as the election was made, advice was sent to the kings of Acolhuacan and Tacuba, in order that they might confirm it, and also to the feudatory lords who had been present at the funeral. These two kings led the new chosen sovereign to the greater temple. The feudatory lords went first, with the ensigns of their states; then the nobles of the court with the badges

SECT. VII.  
The pomp  
and ceremonies  
at the  
proclamation  
and unction  
of the king.



BOOK VII. of their dignity and offices; the two allied kings followed next, and behind them the king elect, stript naked, without any covering except the *maxtlatl*, the girdle, or large bandage, about his middle. He ascended the temple, resting on the arms of two nobles of the court, where one of the high-priests, accompanied by the most respectable officers of the temple, received him. He worshipped the idol of Huitzilopochtli, touching the earth with his hand, and then carrying it to his mouth. The high-priest dyed his body with a certain kind of ink, and sprinkled him four times with water which had been blessed, according to their rite, at the grand festival of Huitzilopochtli, making use for this purpose of branches of cedar and willow, and the leaves of maize. He was clothed in a mantle, on which were painted skulls and bones of the dead, and his head was covered with two other cloaks, one black, and the other blue, on which similar figures were represented. They tied a small gourd to his neck, containing a certain powder, which they esteemed a strong preservative against diseases, sorcery, and treason. Happy would that people be whose king could carry about him such a preservative. They put afterwards a censer, and a bag of copal in his hands, that he might give incense to the idol with them. When this act of religion was performed, during which the king remained on his knees, the high-priest sat down and delivered a discourse to him, in which after congratulating him on his advancement, he informed him of the obligation he owed his subjects for having raised him to the throne, and warmly recommended to him zeal for religion and justice, the protection of the poor, and the defence of his native country and kingdom. The allied kings and the nobles next addressed him to the same purpose; to which the king answered with thanks and promises to exert himself to the utmost of his power for the happiness of the state. Gomara, and other authors who have copied him, affirm, that the high-priest made him swear to maintain their ancient religion, to observe the laws of his ancestors, and to make the sun go his course, to make the clouds pour down rain, to make the rivers run, and all fruits to ripen. If it is true, that they made the king take so extravagant an oath, it is probable, that they only meant to oblige him to maintain a conduct worthy of these favours from heaven.

After hearing these addresses, the king descended with all his attendants to the lower area, where the rest of the nobility waited to make their obedience, and pay him homage in jewels and apparel. He was thence conducted to a chamber within the inclosure of the temple called *Tlacatecco*, where he was left by himself four days, during which time he was allowed to eat but once a day; but he might eat flesh or any other kind of food. He bathed twice every day, and after bathing he drew blood from his ears, which he offered together with some burnt copal to Huitzilopochtli, making all the while constant and earnest prayers to obtain that enlightenment of understanding which was requisite in order to govern his monarchy with prudence. On the fifth day, the nobility returned to the temple, conducting the new king to his palace, where the feudatory lords came to renew the investiture of their fiefs. Then followed the rejoicings of the people, entertainments, dances, and illuminations.

To prepare for the coronation it was necessary, according to the law of the kingdom, or the custom introduced by Montezuma I. that the new elected king should go out to war, to procure the victims which were necessary for the sacrifices on such an occasion. They never were without enemies on whom war might be made; either from some province of the kingdom having rebelled, or from some Mexican merchants having been unjustly put to death, or on account of some insult having been offered to the royal ambassadors, of which cases history shews many examples. The arms and ensigns which the king wore upon going to war, the parade with which his prisoners were conducted to the court, and the circumstances which attended the sacrifice of them, shall be explained when we come to treat of the military establishment of the Mexicans; but we are entirely ignorant of the particular ceremonies which were used at his coronation. The king of Acolhuacan was the person who put the crown upon his head. The crown which was called by the Mexicans *copilli*, was a sort of small mitre, the fore-part of which was raised up, and terminated in a point, and the part behind was lowered down, and hung over the neck in the same manner as is represented in the figures of the kings given in this history. It was composed of different materials, according to the pleasure of the kings; sometimes made of thin plates.

SECT. VIII.  
The coronation, crown, dress; and insignia of royalty.



## BOOK VII.

plates of gold, sometimes wove with golden thread, and figured with beautiful feathers. The dress which he usually wore in the palace was the *xiubtilmatli*, which was a mantle of a blue and white mixture. When he went to the temple he put on a white habit. That which he wore to assist at councils, and other public functions, varied according to the nature and circumstances of the occasion; one was appropriated for civil causes, and another for criminal causes; one for acts of justice, and another for times of rejoicing: upon all these occasions he regularly wore his crown. Every time he went abroad, he was attended by a great retinue of nobility, and preceded by a noble, who held up three rods made of gold and odorous wood, by which he intimated to the people the presence of their sovereign.

SECT. IX.  
Rights of the  
king.

The power and authority of the kings of Mexico was different at different periods. In the beginning of the monarchy their power was much circumscribed, and their authority truly paternal, their conduct more humane, and the prerogatives which they claimed from their subjects extremely moderate. With the enlargement of their territory they gradually increased their riches, their magnificence, and pomp, and in proportion to their wealth were likewise multiplied, as generally happens, the burthens on their subjects. Their pride occasioned them to trespass upon the limits, which the consent of the nation had allowed to their authority, until they arrived at that pitch of odious despotism which appears to have marked the reign of Montezuma II. but notwithstanding their tyranny, the Mexicans always preserved the respect which was due to the royal character, except that in the last year but one of the monarchy, as will be related hereafter, when they were no longer able to endure the meanness of their king Montezuma, his excessive cowardice, and low submission to his enemies, they treated him with contempt, and wounded him with arrows and stones. The pageantry and ostentatious grandeur of the last Mexican kings may be conceived from what we have said of the reign of Montezuma, and what we shall farther say in our account of the conquest.

The kings of Mexico were rivalled in magnificence by the kings of Acolhuacan, as the latter were by the former, in politics. The government of the Acolhuan nation was almost the same with that of the Mexicans; but with respect to the right of succession to the crown they

they were totally different; for in the kingdom of Acolhuacan, and the same is to be understood of Tacuba, the sons succeeded to their fathers, not according to their birth, but according to their rank; the sons which were born of the queen, or principal wife, having been always preferred to the rest. This rule was observed from the time of Xolotl, the first Chechemecan king, until the time of Cacamatzin, who was succeeded by his brother Cuicuitzcatzin, through the intrigues of Montezuma and the conqueror Cortes.

The king of Mexico, as well as the king of Acolhuacan, had three supreme councils, composed of persons of the first nobility, in which they deliberated upon affairs relating to the government of the provinces, the revenues of the king, and to war, and in general the king resolved upon no measure of importance without having first heard the opinion of his counsellors. In the history of the conquest we shall find Montezuma in frequent deliberation with his council on the pretensions of the Spaniards. We do not know the number of members of each council, nor do historians furnish us with the lights necessary to illustrate such a subject. They have only preserved to us the names of some counsellors, particularly those of Montezuma II. In the sixty-first painting of the collection of Mendoza, are represented the council-halls, and some of the lords who composed them.

SECT. X.  
The royal  
council and  
officers of the  
court.

Amongst the different ministers and officers of the court there was a treasurer-general, whom they called *Hueicalpixqui*, or great majordomo, who received all the tributes which were collected by the officers of the revenue in the provinces, and kept an account of his receipts and disbursements in paintings, agreeable to the testimony of Bernal Diaz, who saw them. There was another treasurer for the gems and articles of gold, who was, at the same time, director of the artists who wrought them; and another for the works which were made of feathers, the artists of which last employment had their work-shops in the royal palace of birds. There was besides a provider-general of animals, whom they called *Huejaminqui*; he had the charge of the royal woods, and took care that game was never wanting there; and that the royal palaces were never unprovided with every sort of animal. Concerning the other royal ministers and officers, we have mentioned enough when we treated of the magnificence of Montezuma



## BOOK VII.

## SECT. XI.

## Ambassadors.

zuma II. and of the government of the kings of Acolhuacan, Techoatlala, and Nezahualcojotl.

For the office of ambassadors, they always employed persons who were both noble and eloquent. Three, four, or more persons were usually joined in this office, and, to procure respect, they wore certain badges by which they were every where known, particularly a green habit made like the scapulary, or little cloak, which some religious people wear, from which hung some locks of cotton. Their hair was twisted with beautiful feathers, from which also hung similar locks of different colours. In their right hands they carried an arrow with the point downwards; in the left a shield, and hanging at the same arm a net, in which they carried their provision. In all the places through which they passed, they were well received, and treated with that distinction which their character demanded, provided they did not leave the great road which led to the place of their destination; but if they ever deviated from it, they lost their rights and privileges as ambassadors. When they arrived at the place where they were to deliver their embassy, they stopped before they made entrance, and waited until the nobility of the city came out to meet them, and conduct them to the House of the Public, where they were lodged and well entertained. The nobles burnt incense to them, and presented nosegays of flowers, and after they had reposed, led them to the palace of the lord of that state, and introduced them into the hall of audience, where they were received by the lord himself, and his counsellors, who were all seated in their places. After having made a profound reverence to the lord, they sat down upon their heels in the middle of the hall, and without saying a word, or lifting up their eyes, they waited until a sign was made for them to speak. When the signal was given, the most respectable amongst the ambassadors, after having made another bow to the lord, delivered his embassy with a low voice, in a studied address, which was attentively heard by the lord and his counsellors, who kept their heads so much inclined, that they appeared almost to touch their knees. When the ambassadors had finished their interview, they returned to the house where they were lodged. In the mean while, the lord entered into consultation with his counsellors, and communicated his answer to the ambassadors by means of his ministers; provided them abundantly with provisions for  
their

their journey, made them also some presents, and caused them to be escorted out of the city by the same persons who had received them upon their arrival. If the lord, to whom the embassy was sent, was a friend to the Mexicans, it was considered as a great dishonour not to accept his presents; but if he was an enemy, the ambassadors could not receive them without the express order of their master. All these ceremonies were not invariably observed in embassies, nor were all embassies sent to the lords of cities or states; for some of them, as we shall mention hereafter, were sent to the body of the nobility, or to the people.

The couriers whom the Mexicans frequently employed, made use of different ensigns according to the nature of the intelligence, or affair with which they were charged. If it was the news of the Mexicans having lost a battle, the courier wore his hair loose and disordered, and, without speaking a word to any person, went straight to the palace, where, kneeling before the king, he related what had happened. If it was the news of a victory which had been obtained by the arms of Mexico, he had his hair tied with a coloured string, and his body girt with a white cotton cloth; in his left hand a shield, and in his right a sword, which he brandished as if he had been in the act of engagement; expressing by such gestures his glad tidings, and singing the glorious actions of the ancient Mexicans, while the people, overjoyed at seeing him, led him with many congratulations to the royal palace.

BOOK VII.  
SECT. XII.  
Couriers and  
posts.

In order that news might be more speedily conveyed, there were upon all the highways of the kingdom certain little towers, about six miles distant from each other, where couriers were always waiting in readiness to set out with dispatches. As soon as the first courier was sent off, he ran as swiftly as he could to the first stage, or little tower, where he communicated to another his intelligence, and delivered to him the paintings which represented the news, or the affair which was the subject of his embassy. The second courier posted without delay to the next stage, or little tower; and thus by a continued and uninterrupted speed of conveyance, intelligence was carried so rapidly from place to place, that sometimes, according to the affirmations made by several authors, it reached the distance of three hundred miles in one day. It was by this means that fresh fish were daily brought to Monte-



BOOK VII. zuma II. from the gulf of Mexico, which is at least upwards of two hundred miles distant from the capital. Those couriers were exercised in running from their childhood; and in order to encourage them in this exercise, the priests, under whose discipline they were trained, frequently bestowed rewards on those who were victors in a race.

SECT. XIII.  
The nobility  
and right of  
succession.

With respect to the nobility of Mexico and of the whole empire, it was divided into several classes, which were confounded together by the Spaniards under the general name of *caziques* (*q*). Each class had its particular privileges and wore its own badges, by which means, although their dress was extremely simple, the character of every person was immediately understood. The nobles alone were allowed to wear ornaments of gold and gems upon their cloaths, and to them exclusively belonged, from the reign of Montezuma II. all the high offices at court, in the magistracy, and the most considerable in the army.

The highest rank of nobility in Tlascala, in Huexotzinco, and in Cholula, was that of *Teuelli*. To obtain this rank it was necessary to be of noble birth, to have given proofs in several battles of the utmost courage, to be arrived at a certain age, and to command great riches for the enormous expences which were necessary to be supported by the possessor of such a dignity. The candidate was obliged besides to undergo a year of regular penance, consisting in perpetual fasting and frequent effusions of blood, and an abstinence from all commerce whatsoever with women, and patiently enduring the insults, the reproaches, and ill-treatment, by which fortitude and constancy are put to the test. They bored the cartilage of his nose, in order to suspend from it certain grains of gold, which were the principal badge of this dignity. On the day on which he came to the possession of it, they stripped him of the dismal habit which he had worn during the time of his penance, and dressed him in most magnificent attire: they tied his hair with a leathern ribband, died of a red colour, at which hung beautiful feathers, and fixed also the grains of gold at his nose. This ceremony was performed, in the upper area of the greater temple, by a

(*q*) The name *cazique*, which signifies *lord* or *prince*, is derived from the Haitin tongue, which was spoke in the island of Hispaniola. The Mexicans called a lord *Tlatoani*, and a noble *Pilli* and *Teuelli*.

priest, who, after having conferred the dignity, made him a congratulatory harangue. From thence he descended to the lower area, where he joined with the nobility in a grand dance that was made there, and which was succeeded by a magnificent entertainment, which was given at his expence to all the lords of the state, for whom besides the innumerable dresses which were made in presents to them, such an abundance of meats were prepared, there were consumed upon the occasion, agreeable to the accounts of some authors, from one thousand to sixteen hundred turkies, a vast number of rabbits, deer, and other animals, and an incredible quantity, of cocoas in different sorts of beverage, and of the most choice and delicate fruits of that country. The title *Teuētlī* was added in the manner of a surname to the proper name of persons advanced to this dignity, as *Cbechemeca-teuētlī*, *Pil-teuētlī*, and others. The *Teuētlī* took precedence of all others in the senate, both in the order of sitting and voting, and were permitted to have a servant behind them with a seat, which was esteemed a privilege of the highest honour.

The titles of nobility amongst the Mexicans were for the most part hereditary. Even until the downfall of the empire many families that were descended of those illustrious Aztecas who founded Mexico, preserved themselves in great splendour, and several branches of those most ancient houses are still existing, though reduced by misfortunes, and obscured and confused amongst the vulgar (*r*). It is not to be doubted that it would have been more wise policy in the Spaniards, if, instead of conducting women from Europe, and slaves from Africa, to Mexico, they had endeavoured to form by marriages, between the Mexicans and themselves, one single individual nation. If the nature of this history would permit, we could here give a demonstration of the advantages which would have been derived to both nations from such an

(*r*) It is impossible to behold without regret, the state of degradation to which some illustrious families of that kingdom have been reduced. Not very long ago was executed a locksmith, who was a descendant of the ancient kings of Michuacan: we knew a poor taylor in Mexico, who was descended of a very noble house of Coyoacan, but had been deprived of the possessions which he inherited from his illustrious ancestors. Examples of this kind are not infrequent even among the royal families of Mexico, Acolhuacan, and Tacuba; the repeated orders, which the justice and clemency of the Catholic kings caused to be made in their favour, have not been sufficient to protect them from the general calamity of their nation.



**BOOK VII.** union, and the misfortunes which were occasioned by the opposite conduct.

In Mexico, and through the whole empire almost, excepting in the royal family as we have already mentioned, the sons succeeded to all the rights of their fathers; and on failure of sons the rights fell to brothers, and if these were wanting, to nephews.

**SECT. XIV.**  
Division of  
the lands, and  
titles of pos-  
session and  
property.

The lands of the Mexican empire were divided between the crown, the nobility, the communities, and the Temples, and there were paintings in which the property of each was distinctly represented. The lands of the crown were painted of a purple, those of the nobility of a scarlet, and those of the communities of a yellow colour. In these, at first sight, the extent and boundaries of the different estates were distinguished. After the conquest, the Spanish magistrates made use of these instruments to decide all disputes among the Indians concerning the property or possession of lands.

Of the lands of the crown, which were called by the Mexicans *Tecpantlalli*, although the property was always vested in the king, certain lords called *Tecpanpoubque*, or *Tecpantlaca*, that is, *people of the palace*, enjoyed the temporary use and profits. These lords did not pay any tribute, nor gave any thing else to the king than nosegays of flowers and different kinds of birds, which they presented to him in token of their vassalage every time that they made him a visit; but they were obliged to repair and rebuild the royal palaces whenever it was necessary, and to cultivate the gardens of the king, by assisting with their directions the populace of their district in that labour. They were obliged besides to pay court to the king, and to attend upon him every time that he appeared in public, and were therefore highly esteemed by all. When any of those lords died, his first-born son entered into possession of the lands, and into all the obligations of his father; but if he went to establish himself in another place, he lost these rights, and the king then granted them to another usufructuary; or left the choice of one to the judgment of the community in whose district the lands were situated.

The lands which they called *pillalli*, that is, lands of the nobles, were the ancient possessions of the nobles, transmitted by inheritance from father to son, or were rewards obtained from the king in recompense

penſe of ſervices done to the crown. The firſt and the laſt could for BOOK VII.  
the moſt part alienate their poſſeſſions, but they were not allowed to  
give away or ſell them to plebeians; we ſay for the moſt part, becauſe  
amongſt theſe lands there were ſome granted by the king under a con-  
dition not to alienate them, but to leave them in inheritance to their  
ſons.

Reſpecting the inheritance of ſtates, regard was paid to priority of  
birth; but if the firſt-born ſon was incapable of managing the poſſeſ-  
ſions, the father was entirely at liberty to appoint any other ſon his  
heir, provided that he ſecured a provision for the reſt. The daughters,  
at leaſt in Tlaſcala, were not allowed to inherit, that the ſtate might  
never fall under the government of a ſtranger. Even after the con-  
queſt of the Spaniards, the Tlaſcalans were ſo jealous of preſerving the  
ſtates in their families, that they reſuſed to give the inveſtiture of one  
of the four principalities of the republic to D. Francisco Pimentel,  
nephew of Coanacatzin, king of Acolhuacan (s), married with donna  
*Maria Maxicatzin*, niece to prince *Maxicatzin*, who, as we ſhall af-  
terwards find, was the chief of the four lords that governed that re-  
public at the arrival of the Spaniards. The fiefs commenced in that  
kingdom at the time that king Xolotl divided the lands of Anahuac  
among the Chechemecan and Acolhuan lords, under the feudal condi-  
tions, that they would preſerve inviolable fidelity, acknowledge his ſu-  
preme authority, and their obligation to aſſiſt their ſovereign whenever  
it ſhould be neceſſary with their perſons, with their property, and their  
vaſſals. In the Mexican empire, as far as we can find, real fiefs were  
few in number; and if we are to ſpeak in the ſtrict ſenſe of the civil  
law, there were none at all; for they were neither perpetual in their  
nature, as every year it was neceſſary to repeat the form of inveſtiture,  
nor were the vaſſals of feudatories exempted from the tributes which  
were paid to the king by the other vaſſals of the crown.

The lands which were called *Altepetlali*, that is, thoſe of the com-  
munities of cities and villages, were divided into as many parts as there

(s) Coanacotzin, king of Acolhuacan, was the father of don Ferdinando Pimentel, who had  
don Francesco born to him by a Tlaſcalan lady. It is to be obſerved, that many of the Mexi-  
cans, particularly the nobles, upon being baptiſed, added to their Chriſtian name a Spaniſh  
ſurname.



BOOK VII. were districts in a city, and every district possessed its own part entirely distinct from, and independent of the others. These lands could not be alienated by any means whatever. Some of them were allotted to furnish provisions for the army in time of war; those were called *Melchimalli*, or *Cacalomilli*, according to the kind of provisions which they supplied. The catholic kings have assigned lands to the settlements of the Mexicans (*t*), and made proper laws to secure to them the perpetuity of such possessions; but at present many villages have been deprived of them by the great power of some individuals, assisted by the iniquity of some judges.

SECT. XV.  
The tributes  
and taxes laid  
on the sub-  
jects of the  
crown.

All the provinces that were conquered by the Mexicans were tributary to the crown, and contributed fruits, animals, and the minerals of the country, according to the rate prescribed them; and all merchants besides paid a part of their merchandizes, and all artists a certain portion of their labours. In the capital of every province was a house allotted for a magazine to contain the corn, garments, and all the other effects, which the revenue officers collected in the circle of each district. These officers were universally odious on account of the distresses which they brought on the tributary places. Their badges of distinction were a little rod which they carried in one hand, and a fan of feathers in the other. The treasurers of the king had paintings, in which were described all the tributary places, and the quantity and quality of the tributes. In the collection made by Mendoza, there are thirty-six paintings of this kind (*u*), and in each of these are represented the principal places of one, or of many provinces of the empire. Besides an excessive number of cotton garments, and a certain quantity of corn and feathers, which were the usual taxes laid on almost all tributary places, many other different things were paid in tribute according to the produce of different countries. In order to give

(*t*) The royal laws grant to every Indian village, or settlement, the territory which surrounds them to the extent of six hundred Castilian cubits, which are equal to two hundred and fifty seven Parisian perches.

(*u*) The thirty-six paintings begin with the 13th, and end with the 48th. In the copy of them published by Thevenot, the 21st and 22d are wanting, and for the most part the figures of the tributary cities. The copy published in Mexico in 1770, is still less perfect, for it wants the 21st, 22d, 38th, 39th, and 40th of Mendoza's Collection, besides a number of errors in the interpretations; but it has the advantage over Thevenot's of having the figures of the cities, and of being all executed on plates.

our

our readers some idea of them, we shall mention some of the taxes which are represented in these paintings.

The cities of *Xoconochco*, *Huebuetlan*, *Mazatlan*, and others upon the coast, paid annually to the crown, besides the dresses made of cotton, four thousand handfuls of beautiful feathers of different colours, two hundred bags of cocoas, forty tigers skins, and a hundred and sixty birds of certain particular colours. *Huaxjacac*, *Cojclapan*. *Atlacuechahuajan*, and other places belonging to the Zapotecas, paid in tribute forty plates of gold of a certain size and thickness, and twenty bags of cochineal. *Tlachquiauco*, *Azotlan*, twenty vases of a certain measure full of gold in powder. *Tochtepec*, *Otlatitlan*, *Cozamalloapan*, *Michapan*, and other places upon the coast of the Mexican gulf, besides the garments of cotton, gold, and cocoas, were obliged to contribute seventy-four thousand handfuls of feathers, of different colours and qualities, six necklaces, two of the finest emeralds, and four of those which were ordinary; twenty ear-rings of amber, adorned with gold, and as many of crystal; a hundred small cups or jugs of liquid amber, and sixteen thousand balls of *ule*, or elastic gum. *Tepejacac*, *Quecholac*, *Tecamachalco*, *Acatzinco*, and other places of those regions, furnished four thousand sacks of lime, four thousand loads of *atatli*, or solid canes, fit to be used in buildings, and as many loads of the same canes of a smaller size, fit for making darts, and eight thousand loads of *acajetl*, or little reeds, full of aromatic substances. *Malinaltepec*, *Tlalcozauhtitlan*, *Olinallan*, *Ixcatlan*, *Quialac*, and other places of southern hot countries, six hundred cups of honey, forty large basins of *tecozahuatl*, or yellow ochre, fit for painting, a hundred and sixty axes of copper, forty round plates of gold, of a certain diameter and thickness, ten small measures of fine turquoises, and one load of ordinary turquoises. *Quauhnahuac*, *Panchimalco*, *Atlacholajlan*, *Xiuchtepec*, *Huitzilac*, and other places belonging to the Tlachuicas, sixteen thousand pieces, or large sheets of paper, and four thousand *xicalli* (natural vases, of which we shall treat hereafter), of different sizes. *Quauhtitlan*, *Tehuillojocan*, and other places which were neighbouring to them, eight thousand mats, and as many seats or chairs. Other places contributed fuel, stone, a certain number of beams and planks fit for buildings, and a certain quantity of copal, &c.

Some



BOOK VII. Some tributary people were obliged to send to the royal palaces and woods a certain number of birds and quadrupeds, namely, the people of *Xilotepec*, *Michmalajan*, and other places in the country of the Otomies, which last were obliged to send the king every year forty live eagles. Concerning the Matlatzincas we know that when they were brought under subjection to the crown of Mexico by king Axajacatl, besides the tribute which they are represented to have paid, in the twenty-seventh painting of the collection of Mendoza, the further burthen was imposed on them of cultivating a field about seven hundred perches long and half as broad, for the purpose of furnishing the royal army with provisions. To conclude, a part of every thing useful, which was found in the kingdom, either amongst the productions of nature or art, was paid in tribute to the king of Mexico.

These large contributions, the great presents which the governors of provinces, and the feudatory lords made to the king, together with the spoils of war, formed the great riches of his court which excited so much admiration in the Spanish conquerors, and occasioned so much misery to his unfortunate subjects. The tributes which were at first moderate and easy, became at last excessive and enormous; for the pride and pomp of the kings kept pace with their conquests. It is true, that a great part, and perhaps the greatest part of these revenues was expended for the benefit of the same subjects in the support of a great number of ministers and magistrates for the administration of justice, in the reward of those who had done services to the state, in the relief of the indigent, particularly widows and orphans, and men grown feeble with age, which were the three classes of people most compassionated by the Mexicans, and also by opening the royal granaries in times of great scarcity to the nation; but how many of those unhappy people who were unable to pay the tributes demanded from them must have sunk under the weight of their misery, while the royal beneficence did not reach them? To oppressive taxes were added the greatest rigour in collecting them. Whoever did not pay the tribute prescribed was sold for a slave, in order to purchase with his liberty what he could not gain by his industry.

For the administration of justice, the Mexicans had various tribunals and judges. At court, and in the more considerable places of the king-

kingdom, there was a supreme magistrate named *Cihuacoatl*, whose authority was so great that from the sentences pronounced by him, either in civil or criminal causes, no appeal could be made to any other tribunal, not even to majesty. He had the appointment of the inferior judges, and the receivers of the royal revenues within his district, rendered in their accounts to him. Any one who either made use of his ensigns, or usurped his authority, was punished with death.

The tribunal of the *Tlacatecatl*, though inferior to the first, was extremely respectable, and composed of three judges, namely of the *Tlacatecatl*, who was the chief, and from whom the tribunal took its name, and of two others who were called *Quaubnochtli* and *Tlanotlac*. They took cognizance of civil and criminal causes in the first and second instance, although sentence was pronounced in the name only of the *Tlacatecatl*. They met daily in a hall of the house of the public, which was called *Tlatzontecojan*, that is, the place where judgment is given, to which belonged porters and other officers of justice. There they listened with the utmost attention to litigations, diligently examined into causes, and pronounced sentence according to the laws. If a cause was purely civil, there was no appeal from that court; but if the cause was of a criminal nature, an appeal lay to the *Cihuacoatl*. The sentence was published by the *Tepojotl*, or public cryer, and was executed by the *Quaunochtli*, who, as we have already mentioned, was one of the three judges. The public cryer, as well as the executive minister of justice, was held in high esteem amongst the Mexicans, because they were considered to be the representatives of the king.

In every district of the city resided a *Teuctli*, who was deputy of the tribunal of *Tlacatecatl*, and was elected annually by the commons of that district. He took cognizance, in the first instance, of the causes within his district, and daily waited upon the *Cihuacoatl*, or the *Tlacatecatl*, to report to him every thing which occurred, and to receive his orders. Besides these *Teuctli*, there were in every district certain commissaries, elected in the same manner by the commons of the district, and named *Centeſtlapixque*; but they, from what appears to us, were not judges, but only guardians, charged to observe the conduct of a certain number of families committed to their care, and to acquaint the magistrates with every thing that passed. Next to the *Teuctli* were



BOOK VII. the *Taquitlatoque*, or the runners, who carried the notifications of the magistrates, and summoned guilty persons, and the *Topilli* or the officers who apprehended and made prisoners.

In the kingdom of Acolhuacan, the judicial power was divided amongst seven principal cities. The judges remained in their tribunals from sun-rise until evening. Their meals were brought to them in the tribunal-hall, and that they might not be taken off from their employment, by giving attendance upon their families, nor have any excuse for being corrupted, they were, agreeable to the usage in the kingdom of Mexico, assigned possessions and labourers, who cultivated their fields. Those possessions, as they belonged to the office, not to the officer, did not pass to his heirs but to his successors in that appointment. In causes of importance they durst not pronounce sentence, at least not in the capital, without giving information to the king. Every Mexican month, or every twenty days, an assembly of all the judges was held before the king, in order to determine all causes then undecided. If from their being much perplexed and intricate, they were not finished at that time, they were reserved for another general assembly of a more solemn nature, which was held every eighty days, and was therefore called *Nappapfallatolli*, that is, the Conference of Eighty, at which all causes were finally decided, and in the presence of that whole assembly, punishment was inflicted on the guilty. The king pronounced sentence by drawing a line with the point of an arrow upon the head of the guilty person, which was painted on the process.

In the tribunals of the Mexicans the contending parties made their own allegations: at least we do not know that they employed any other advocates. In criminal causes the accuser was not allowed any other proof than that of his witnesses; but an accused person could clear himself from guilt by his oath. In disputes about the boundaries of possessions, the paintings of the land were consulted as authentic writings.

All the magistrates were obliged to give judgment according to the laws of the kingdom which were represented by paintings. Of these we have seen many, and have extracted from them a part of that which we shall lay before our readers on the subject. The power of making laws in Tezcuco belonged always to the kings, who made those which  
they

they published, be rigorously observed. Amongst the Mexicans, the first laws were made, from what we can discover, by the body of the nobility ; but afterwards the kings became the legislators of the nation, and while their authority was confined within moderate limits, they were zealous in the observance of those laws which they or their ancestors had promulgated. In the last years of the monarchy despotism altered, and changed them at caprice. We shall here enumerate those which were in force at the time the Spaniards entered into Mexico. In some of them much prudence and humanity and a strong attachment to good customs will be discovered ; but in others an excess of rigour which degenerated into cruelty.

BOOK VII.

A traitor to the king or the state was torn in pieces, and his relations who were privy to the treason, and did not discover it, were deprived of their liberty.

SECT. XVII.  
Penal laws.

Whoever dared in war, or at any time of public rejoicing, to make use of the badges of the kings of Mexico, of Acolhuacan, or Tacuba, or of those of the Cihuacoatl, was punished with death, and his goods confiscated.

Whoever maltreated an ambassador, minister, or courier belonging to the king, suffered death ; but ambassadors and couriers were forbid on their part to leave the high road, under pain of losing their privileges.

The punishment of death was inflicted also on those persons who occasioned any sedition amongst the people ; on those who carried off, or changed the boundaries placed in the fields by public authority ; and likewise on judges who gave a sentence that was unjust, or contrary to the laws, or made an unfaithful report of any cause to the king, or a superior magistrate, or allowed themselves to be corrupted by bribes.

He who in war committed any hostility upon the enemy without the order of his chief, or attacked them before the signal for battle was given, or abandoned the colours, or violated any proclamation published to the army, was infallibly beheaded.

He who at market altered the measures established by the magistrates, was guilty of felony, and was put to death without delay in the same place.



## BOOK VII.

A murderer forfeited his own life for his crime, even although the person murdered was but a slave.

He who killed his wife, although he caught her in adultery, suffered death; because, according to them, he usurped the authority of the magistrates, whose province it was to take cognizance of misdeeds, and punish evil-doers.

Adultery was inevitably punished with death. Adulterers were stoned to death, or their heads were bruised between two stones. This law which prescribed that adulterers should be stoned to death, is one of those which we have seen represented in the ancient paintings which were preserved in the library of the supreme college of Jesuits at Mexico. It is also represented in the last painting of the collection made by Mendoza, and is taken notice of by Gomara, Torquemada, and other authors. But they did not consider, nor did they punish as adultery, the trespass of a husband with any woman who was free, or not joined in matrimony: wherefore the husband was not bound to so much fidelity as was exacted from the wife. In all places of the empire this crime was punished, but in some places with greater severity than in others. In Ichoatlan, a woman who was accused of adultery was summoned before the judges, and if the proofs of her crime were satisfactory, she received punishment there immediately; she was torn in pieces, and her limbs divided amongst the witnesses. In Itztepec infidelity in a woman was punished according to the sentence of the magistrates by her husband, who cut off her nose and her ears. In some parts of the empire the punishment of death was inflicted on the husband, who cohabited with his wife, after it was proved that she had violated her fidelity.

No divorce was lawful without the permission of the judges. He who desired to divorce his wife, presented himself before the tribunal and explained his reasons for it. The judges exhorted him to concord, and endeavoured to dissuade him from a separation; but if he persisted in his claim, and his reasons appeared just, they told him that he might do that which he should judge most proper, without giving their authority for a divorce by a formal sentence. If after all he divorced her, he never could recover her nor be united to her again.

Those

Those who were guilty of incest with their nearest of blood, or relations, were hanged, and all marriages between persons so nearly connected were strictly forbid by law, excepting marriages between brothers and sisters-in-law; for amongst the Mexicans, as well as amongst the Hebrews, it was the custom that the brothers of the deceased husband might marry with their widowed sisters-in-law; but there was great difference in this practice of these two nations; for amongst the Hebrews such a marriage could only happen in one case, that was where the husband died without issue; amongst the Mexicans on the contrary, it was necessary that the deceased should leave children, of whose education the brother was to take charge, entering into all the rights of a father. In some places which were distant from the capital, the nobles were accustomed to marry their widowed mothers-in-law, provided their fathers had not had children by them; but in the capitals of Mexico and Tezcucó, and the places neighbouring to them, such marriages were deemed incestuous, and punished with severity.

Any person guilty of a detestable crime was hanged; if a priest, he was burnt alive. Amongst all the nations of Anahuac, excepting the Panuchese, this crime was held in abomination, and was punished by them all with rigour. Nevertheless, vicious men, in order to justify their own excesses, have defamed all the nations of America with this horrid vice; but this calumny, which several Europeans authors have too readily admitted to be just, is proved to be false by the testimony of many other authors, who are more impartial and better informed (x).

The priest, who, during the time that he was dedicated to the service of the temple, abused any free woman, was deprived of the priesthood and banished.

If any of the young men, or young women, who were educating in the seminaries, were guilty of incontinence, they were liable to a severe punishment, and even to suffer death, according to the report of some authors. But, on the other hand, there was no punishment whatever prescribed for simple fornication, although the evil tendency of an excess of this kind was not unknown to them; and fathers frequently

(x) See what we have said in our Dissertations respecting the author who has revived this atrocious calumny upon the Americans.



BOOK VII. admonished their children to beware of it: they burned the hair of a bawd in the market-place with pine torches, and smeared her head with the resin of the same wood. The more respectable the persons were to whom she served in this capacity, so much the greater was the punishment.

According to the laws, the man who dressed himself like a woman, or the woman who dressed herself like a man, was hanged.

The thief of things of small value met with no punishment, excepting that of being obliged to restore what he had stolen; if the things were of great value, he was made the slave of the person whom he had robbed. If the thing stolen did no longer exist, nor the robber had any goods by which he could repay his robbery, he was stoned to death. If he had stolen gold or gems, after being conducted through all the streets of the city, he was sacrificed at the festival which the goldsmiths held in honour of their god Xipe. He who stole a certain number of ears of maize, or pulled up from another's field a certain number of useful trees, was made a slave of the owner of that field (*y*); but every poor traveller was permitted to take of the maize, or the fruit-bearing trees, which were planted by the side of the highway, as much as was sufficient to satisfy immediate hunger.

He who robbed in the market, was immediately put to death by the bastinado, in the market-place.

He also was condemned to death, who in the army robbed another of his arms or badges.

Whoever upon finding a strayed child, made it a slave, and sold it to another, as if it were his own, forfeited by that crime his liberty and his goods, one half of which was appropriated to the support of the child, and the other half was paid to the purchaser that he might set the child at liberty. Whatever number of persons were concerned in the crime, all of them were liable to the same punishment.

To the same punishment of servitude, and to the loss of his goods, was every person liable who sold the possessions of another, which he only had in farm.

(x) The anonymous conqueror says, that stealing of three or four ears of maize was sufficient to incur the penalty. Torquemada adds, that the penalty was death: but this was the law in the kingdom of Acolhuacan only, not in the realm of Mexico.

Tutors who did not give a good account of the estates of their pupils, were hanged without pardon.

The same punishment was inflicted on sons who squandered their patrimony in vices; for they said it was a great crime not to set a higher value on the labours of their fathers.

He who practised forcery was sacrificed to the gods.

Drunkenness in youth was a capital offence; young men were put to death by the bastinado in prison, and young women were stoned to death. In men advanced in years, although it was not made capital, it was punished with severity. If he was a nobleman, he was stripped of his office and his rank, and rendered infamous; if a plebeian, they shaved him (a punishment very sensibly felt by them), and demolished his house, saying, that he who could voluntarily bereave himself of his senses, was not worthy of a habitation amongst men. This law did not forbid conviviality at nuptials, or at any other times of festivity: on such occasions it being lawful, in private houses, to drink more than usual; nor did the law affect old men of seventy years, who, on account of their age, were allowed to drink as much as they pleased; which appears represented in the forty-third painting of the collection made by Mendoza.

He who told a lie to the particular prejudice of another, had a part of his lip cut off, and sometimes his ears.

Of the Mexican laws concerning slaves it is to be observed, that there were three sorts of slaves among them. The first were prisoners of war; the second were those whom they purchased for a valuable consideration; and the third were malefactors, who were deprived of their liberty in punishment of their crimes.

SECT.  
XVIII.  
Laws concerning  
slaves.

The prisoners of war were generally sacrificed to their gods. He who in war took another's prisoner from him, or set him at liberty, was punished with death.

The sale of a slave was not valid, unless it was made in the presence of four lawful witnesses. In general, they assembled in greater numbers, and celebrated contracts of that nature with great solemnity.

Among the Mexicans a slave was allowed to have cattle, to acquire property, and even to purchase slaves who served him; nor could his owner hinder him, nor have service from such slaves; for slavery was only



BOOK VII. only an obligation of personal service, and even that was under certain restrictions.

Nor was slavery entailed upon the descendants of slaves. All Mexicans were born free, although their mothers were slaves. If a free man impregnated another person's slave, and she died during her pregnancy, he became the slave of the owner of the female slave; but if she was happily delivered, the child as well as the father remained both free.

Necessitous parents were allowed to dispose of any one of their children, in order to relieve their poverty; and any free man might sell himself for the same purpose; but owners could not sell their slaves without their consent, unless they were slaves with a collar. Runaway, rebellious, or vicious slaves, had two or three warnings given them by their owners, which warnings they gave for their better justification in presence of some witnesses. If, in spite of these admonitions the slaves did not mend their behaviour, a wooden collar was put about their necks, and then it was lawful to sell them at market. If, after having been owned by two or three masters, they still continued intractable, they were sold for the sacrifices; but that happened very rarely. If a slave, who was collared in this manner, happened to escape from the prison where his owner confined him, and took refuge in the royal palace, he remained free; and the person who attempted to prevent his gaining this asylum, forfeited his liberty for the attempt, except it was the owner, or one of his children, who had a right to seize him.

The persons who sold themselves were generally gamesters, who did so in order to game with the price of their liberty; or those who by laziness, or some misfortune, found themselves reduced to misery, and prostitutes, who wanted cloaths to make their appearance in public; for women of that class among the Mexicans had no interest in general in their profession, but the gratification of their passions. Slavery amongst the Mexicans was not so hard to be borne, as it was among other people; for the condition of a slave among them was by no means oppressive. Their labour was moderate, and their treatment humane; when their masters died, they generally became free. The common price of a slave was a load of cotton garments.

There

There was among the Mexicans another kind of slavery, which they called *Huebuetatlacolli*, which was, where one or two families, on account of their poverty, bound themselves to furnish some lord perpetually with a slave. They delivered up one of their sons for this purpose, and after he had served for some years they recalled him, in order to let him marry, or for some other motive, and substituted another in his place. The change was made without giving any offence to the patron; on the contrary, he generally gave some consideration for a new slave. In the year 1506, on account of a great scarcity which happened then, many families were obliged to this kind of servitude; but they were all freed from it by the king of Acolhuacan, Nezahualpilli, owing to the hardships they suffered from it; and, after his example, the same thing was done by Montezuma II. in his dominions.

The conquerors, who imagined they entered into all the rights of the ancient Mexican lords, had, at first, many slaves of those nations; but when the Catholic kings were informed of it by persons of credit who were zealous for the public good, and well acquainted with the manners and customs of those people, they declared all those slaves free, and forbid, under severe penalties, any attempt against their liberty. A law infinitely just, and worthy the humanity of those monarchs; for the first religious missionaries who were employed in the conversion of the Mexicans, amongst whom were men of much learning, declared, after diligent examination, that they had not been able to find one amongst the slaves who had been justly deprived of his natural liberty.

We have now said all that we know of the Mexican legislature. More complete information on this head, and in particular concerning their civil contracts, their tribunals, and supreme councils, might have proved extremely valuable; but the unfortunate loss of the greater part of their paintings, and of some manuscripts of the first Spaniards, has deprived us of the only lights which could have illustrated this subject.

Although the laws of the capital were generally received throughout the whole empire, yet in some of the provinces many variations from them took place; for as the Mexicans did not oblige the conquered nations to speak the language of their court, neither did they compel

SECT. XIX.  
Laws of other  
countries of  
Anahuac.



## BOOK VII.

them to adopt all their laws. The legislature of Acolhuacan was the most similar to that of Mexico; but still they differed in many particulars, and the former was far more severe than the latter.

The laws published by the celebrated king Nezahualcojotl ordained, that a thief should be dragged through the streets, and afterwards hanged. Murderers were beheaded. The agent in the crime of sodomy was suffocated in a heap of ashes; the patient had his bowels torn out, after which his belly was filled with ashes, and then he was burned. He who maliciously contrived to sow discord between two states, was tied to a tree and burned alive. He who drank till he lost his senses, if a nobleman, was immediately hanged, and his body was thrown into the lake, or into some river; if a plebeian, for the first offence, he lost his liberty, and for the second his life. And when the legislator was asked, why the law was more severe upon nobles, he answered, that the crime of drunkenness was less pardonable in them, as they were more bound in duty to set a good example.

The same king prescribed the punishment of death to historians who published any falsehood in their paintings (*y*). He condemned robbers of the fields to the same punishment, and declared that the stealing seven ears of maize was sufficient to incur the penalty.

The Tlascalans adopted the greater part of the laws of Acolhuacan. Among them, sons, who were wanting in respect and duty to their parents, were put to death by order of the senate. Those persons who were authors of any public misfortune, and yet did not deserve to be punished with death, were banished. Generally speaking, among all the polished nations of Anahuac, murder, theft, lying, adultery, and other similar crimes of incontinence, were rigorously punished, and that which we have already observed, when speaking of their character, appears to be verified in every thing, namely, that they were (as they still are) naturally inclined to severity and rigour, and more vigilant to punish vice than to reward virtue.

(*y*) This law against false historians is attested by D. Ferdinando d'Alba Ixtlilxochitl (who was a descendant of that legislator), in his valuable manuscripts.

Among

Among the punishments prescribed by the legislators of Mexico against malefactors, that of the fork or gallows was reckoned the most ignominious. That of banishment was also thought infamous, as it supposed the guilty person possessed of an infectious vice. That of whipping is not found among their laws; nor do we know that it was ever made use of except by parents to their children, or masters to their pupils.

They had two sorts of prisons; one similar to modern prisons, called *Teilpilojan*, which was appropriated for debtors who refused to pay their debts, and for such persons as were guilty of crimes not deserving death; the other called *Quaubcalli*, resembling a cage, was used to confine prisoners who were to be sacrificed, and persons guilty of capital offences. Both of them were well watched and strongly guarded. Those who were to be capitally punished were fed very sparingly, in order that they might taste by anticipation the bitterness of death. The prisoners on the contrary were well nourished, in order that they might appear in good flesh at the sacrifice. If through the negligence of the guard, any prisoner escaped from the cage, the community of the district, whose duty it was to supply the prisons with guards, was obliged to pay to the owner of the fugitive, a female slave, a load of cotton garments, and a shield.

Having treated thus far of the civil, it is now become necessary to say something of the military government of the Mexicans. No profession was held in more esteem amongst them than the profession of arms. The deity of war was the most revered by them, and regarded as the chief protector of the nation. No prince was elected king, until he had, in several battles, displayed proofs of his courage and military skill, and merited the splendid post of general of the army; and no king was crowned, until he had taken, with his own hands, the victims which were to be sacrificed at the festival of his coronation.

All the Mexican kings, from Itzcoatl the first, down to Quautemotzin, who was their last, rose from the command of the army to the government of the kingdom. Those who died for the sake of their country, with their arms in their hands, were imagined to be the happiest souls in another life. From the great esteem in which the profession of arms was held amongst them, they were at much pains to make their children courageous, and to enure them from the earliest infancy to the hardships

BOOK VII.

SECT. XX.  
Punishments  
and prisons.SECT. XXI.  
Officers of  
war and mili-  
tary orders.



## BOOK VII.

of war. It was this elevated notion of the glory of arms, which formed those heroes, whose illustrious actions we have already related : which made them shake off the yoke of the Tepanecas, and erect on so humble a foundation, so famous and celebrated a monarchy : and lastly, which produced the extension of their dominions from the banks of the lake to the shores of the two opposite seas.

The highest military dignity was that of general of the army ; but there were four different ranks of generals, of which the most respectable was that of *Tlacochcalcatl* (z), and each rank had its particular badges of distinction. We are uncertain in what degree the other three ranks were subordinate to the first ; nor can we even tell their names, on account of the different opinions of authors on this head (a). Next to the generals were the captains, each of whom commanded a certain number of soldiers.

In order to reward the services of warriors, and give them every kind of encouragement, the Mexicans devised three military orders, called *Achcaubtin*, *Quaubtin*, and *Oocelo*, or Princes, Eagles, and Tygers. The persons belonging to the order of princes, who were called *Quachiſtin*, were the most honoured. They wore their hair tied on the top of their heads with a red string, from which hung as many locks of cotton as they had performed meritorious actions. This honour was so much esteemed among them, that the kings themselves, as well as the generals, were proud of having it conferred upon them. Montezuma II. belonged to this order, as Acoſta affirms, and also king Tizoc, as appears in the paintings of him. The Tygers were distinguished by a particular armour which they wore, it being spotted like the skins of these wild animals ; but such insignia were only made use of in war : at court all the officers of the army wore a dress of mixed colours, which was called *Tlachquaubjo*. No persons on the first time of their going to war, were allowed to wear any badge of dis-

(z) Some authors say that *Tlacochcalcatl*, signifies prince of the darts ; but unquestionably it means only, inhabitant of the arsenal, or house of the darts.

(a) The interpreter of Mendoza's Collection says, that the names of the four ranks of generals, were *Tlacochcalcatl*, *Atempāncatl*, *Ezhuacatecatl*, and *Tlillancalqui*. Acoſta, instead of *Atempāncatl*, says *Tlaccatecatl*, and instead of *Ezhuacatecatl*, *Ezhuabuacatl* ; and adds, that these were the names of the four electors. Torquemada adopts the name of *Tlaccatecatl*, but sometimes he makes his rank inferior to the *Tlacochcalcatl*, and at other times he confounds them together.

inction; they were dressed in a coarse white habit, of cloth made from the aloe; and this rule was so strictly observed, that it was even necessary for the princes of the royal blood to give some proofs of their courage before they could be entitled to change that plain dress for another more costly, called *Teucaliubqui*. The members of those military orders, besides the exterior marks of distinction which they wore, were allotted particular apartments in the royal palace, whenever they waited upon the king as guards. They were allowed to have furniture in their houses made of gold, to wear the finest cotton dress, and finer shoes than those of the common people; but no soldier had permission to do this until he had gained, by his bravery, some advancement in the army. A particular dress called *Tlacatziubqui* was given as a reward to the soldier, who, by his example, encouraged a dispirited army to renew battle with vigour.

BOOK VII.

When the king went to war, he wore besides his armour, particular badges of distinction; on his legs, half boots made of thin plates of gold; on his arms, plates of the same metal, and bracelets of gems; at his under lip hung an emerald set in gold; at his ears, ear-rings of the same stone; about his neck a necklace, or chain of gold and gems, and a plume of beautiful feathers on his head; but the badge most expressive of majesty, was a work of great labour made of beautiful feathers, which reached from the head all down the back (*b*). The Mexicans were very attentive to distinguish persons, particularly in war, by different badges.

SECT. XXII.  
The military  
dress of the  
king.

The defensive and offensive arms which were made use of by the Mexicans, and the other nations of Anahuac, were of various sorts. The defensive arms common to the nobles and plebeians, to the officers and soldiers, were shields, which they called *Chimalli* (*c*), and were made of different forms and materials. Some of them were perfectly round, and others were rounded only in the under part. Some

SECT.  
XXIII.  
The arms of  
the Mexi-  
cans.

(*b*) All these royal insignia had their particular names. The boots were called *cozebuatl*, the brachials *matemcatl*, the bracelets *matzopeztli*, the emerald at the lip *tentetl*, the ear-rings *nacochtili*, the necklace *cozcapetlatl*, and the principal badge of feathers *quachitli*.

(*c*) Solis pretends, that the shield was used only by lords; but the anonymous conqueror, who frequently saw the Mexicans in arms, and was engaged in many battles against them, asserts expressly, that this armour was common to all ranks. No author has informed us more accurately than he of the Mexican armour.

were.



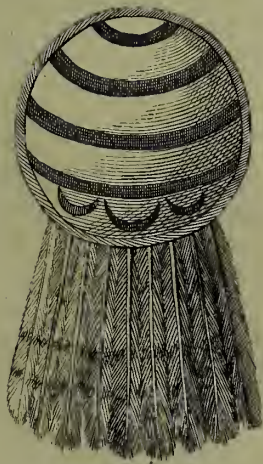
BOOK VII. were made of *otatli*, or solid elastic canes, interwoven with thick cotton threads, and covered with feathers; those of the nobles with thin plates of gold; others were made of large tortoise-shells, adorned with copper, silver, and gold, according to the wealth of the owner, or his rank in the army. These were of a moderate size; but others were so excessively large, that they could occasionally cover the whole body; but when it was not necessary to use them, they could compress them, and carry them under their arms like the parasols of the moderns; it is probable, they were made of the skins of animals, or cloth waxed with *ule*, or elastic gum (*d*). On the other hand, many of their shields were very small, more beautiful than strong, and adorned with fine feathers; these were not employed in war, but only at the entertainments which they made in imitation of a battle.

The defensive arms peculiar to the officers were breast-plates of cotton, one and sometimes two fingers thick, which were arrow-proof; and on this account the Spaniards themselves made use of them in the war against the Mexicans. The name *Ichcabuepilli*, which the Mexicans gave to this sort of breast-plate, was changed by the Spaniards into the word *Eiscaupil*. Over this sort of cuirass, which only covered part of the breast, they put on another piece of armour, which, besides the chest, covered the thighs, and the half of the arms, figures of which appear in the plate representing the Mexican armour. The lords were accustomed to wear a thick upper coat of feathers, over a cuirass made of several plates of gold, or silver gilt, which rendered them invulnerable, not only by arrows, but even by darts or swords, as the anonymous conqueror affirms. Besides the armour which they wore for the defence of their chests, their arms, their thighs, and even their legs; their heads were usually cased in the heads of tygers, or serpents, made of wood, or some other substance, with the mouth open, and furnished with large teeth that they might inspire terror, and so animated in appearance, that the above mentioned author says, they seemed to be vomiting up the soldiers. All the officers and nobles wore a beautiful plume of feathers on their heads, in order to add to the appearance of their stature. The common soldiers went entirely naked,

(*d*) These large shields are mentioned by the anonymous conqueror, Didaco Godoi, and Bernal Dias, who were all present at the conquest.



*Shields*



*Sword*





except the *maxtlatl*, or girdle, which covered the private parts; but they counterfeited the dress which they wanted by different colours, with which they painted their bodies. The European historians, who express so much wonder at this, have not observed how common the same practice was among the ancient nations of Europe itself.

The offensive arms of the Mexicans were arrows, slings, clubs, spears, pikes, swords, and darts. Their bows were made of a wood, which was elastic and difficult to break, and the string of the sinews of animals, or the hair of the stag. Some of their bows were so large (as they are at present among some nations of that continent), that they required more than five feet length of string. Their arrows were made of hard rods, pointed with the sharp bone of a fish, or other animal, or a piece of flint, or *itzli*. They were extremely expert at drawing the bow, and very dextrous marksmen, being exercised in it from childhood, and encouraged by rewards from their masters and parents. The Tehuacanese nation was particularly famous for their skill in shooting two or three arrows together. The surprising feats of dexterity, which have been exhibited even in our time by the Tarau-marese, the Hiaquese, and other people of those regions, who still use the bow and arrow, enable us to judge of the expertness and excellence of the ancient Mexicans in that way (*e*). No people of the country of Anahuac ever made use of poisoned arrows; this was probably owing to their desire of taking their enemies alive for the purpose of sacrificing them.

The *Maquahuitl*, called by the Spaniards *Spada*, or sword, as it was the weapon among the Mexicans, which was equivalent to the sword of the old continent, was a stout stick three feet and a half long, and about four inches broad, armed on each side with a sort of razors of the stone *itzli*, extraordinarily sharp, fixed and firmly fastened to the stick with gum lack (*f*), which were about three inches long, one or two inches broad,

(*e*) The dexterity of those people in shooting arrows would not be credible, were it not well ascertained by the depositions of a variety of eye-witnesses. It was usual for a number of archers to assemble together, and throw up an ear of maize into the air, at which they immediately shot with such quickness and dexterity, that before it could reach the ground it was stripped of every grain.

(*f*) Hernandez says, that one stroke of the maquahuitl was sufficient to cut a man through the middle; and the anonymous conqueror attests, that he saw in an engagement a Mexican,



BOOK VII. broad, and as thick as the blade of our ancient swords. This weapon was so keen, that once it entirely beheaded a horse at one stroke, according to the affirmation of Acoſta; but the first stroke only was to be feared; for the razors became soon blunt. They tied this weapon by a string to their arm, lest they might lose it in any violent conflict. The form of the maquahuitl is described by several historians, and is represented in one of the plates of this history.

The pikes of the Mexicans, instead of iron, were pointed with a large flint, but some of them also with copper. The Chinantecas, and some people of Chiapan, made use of pikes so monstrous, that they exceeded three perches, or eighteen feet in length, and the conqueror Cortes employed them against the cavalry of his rival Panfilo Navaez.

The *Tlacochtli*, or Mexican dart, was a small lance of *otatli*, or some other strong wood, the point of which was hardened by fire, or shod with copper, or *itzli*, or bone, and many of them had three points, in order to make a triple wound at every stroke.

They fixed a string to their darts (*g*), in order to pull them back again, after they had launched them at the enemy. This was the weapon which was the most dreaded by the Spanish conquerors; for they were so expert at throwing them, that they pierced the body of an enemy through and through. The soldiers were armed in general with a sword, a bow and arrows, a dart, and a sling. We do not know, whether in war, they ever made use of their axes, of which we shall shortly speak.

S F C T.  
XXIV.  
Standards  
and martial  
music.

They had also standards and musical instruments proper for war. Their standards, which were more like the *Signum* of the Romans than our colours, were staves from eight to ten feet long, on which they carried the arms or ensigns of the state, made of gold, or feathers, or some other valuable materials. The armorial ensign of the Mexican empire, was an eagle in the act of darting upon a tyger; that of the republic of Tlascala, an eagle with its wings spread (*b*); but each of

with one stroke which he gave a horse in the belly, make his intestines drop out; and another, who with one stroke which he gave a horse upon the head, laid him dead at his feet.

(*g*) The Mexican dart was of that kind of darts which the Romans used to call *Hastile*, *jaculum*, or *Telum amentatum*, and the Spanish name *Amento* or *Ameinto*, which the historians of Mexico have adopted, means the same thing as the *Amentum* of the Romans.

(*b*) Gomara says, that the armorial ensign of the republic of Tlascala was a crane; but other historians, better informed than he was, affirm that it was an eagle.

the

the four lordships which composed the republic, had its proper ensign. BOOK VII.  
 That of Ocotelolco, was a green bird upon a rock; that of Tizatlan, a heron upon a rock also; that of Tepeticpac, a fierce wolf, holding some arrows in his paws; and that of Quiahuiztlan, a parasol of green feathers. The standard which the conqueror Cortes took in the famous battle of Otompan, was a net of gold, which, in all probability, was the standard of some city situated on the lake. Besides the common and principal standard of the army, every company, consisting of two or three hundred soldiers, carried its particular standard, and was not only distinguished from others by it, but likewise by the colour of the feathers, which the officers and nobles bore upon their armour. The standard-bearer of the army, at least in the last years of the empire, was the general, and those of the companies, most probably, were borne by their commanding officers. Those standards were so firmly tied upon the backs of the officers, that it was almost impossible to detach them without cutting the standard-bearers to pieces. The Mexicans always placed their standard in the centre of their army. The Tlascalans, when they marched their troops in time of peace placed it in the van, but in the time of war, in the rear of their army.

Their martial music, in which there was more noise than harmony, consisted of drums, horns, and certain sea-shells which made an extremely shrill sound.

Previous to a declaration of war, the supreme council examined into the cause which induced them to undertake it, which was for the most part the rebellion of some city or province, the putting to death unlawfully some Mexican, Acolhuan, or Tepanecan couriers, or merchants, or some gross insult offered to their ambassadors. If the rebellion originated in some of the chiefs, and not among the people, the guilty persons were conducted to the capital and punished. But if the people were also in fault, satisfaction was demanded from them in the name of the king. If they submitted, and manifested a sincere repentance, their crime was pardoned, and they were advised to better conduct; but if, instead of submission, they answered with arrogance, and persisted in denying the satisfaction demanded, or offered any new insult to the messengers which were sent to them, the affair was discussed in the council, and if war was resolved upon, proper orders were

SECT. XXV.  
 The mode of  
 declaring and  
 carrying on  
 war.



BOOK VII. given to the generals. Sometimes the kings, in order to justify their conduct more fully before they made war upon any state or place, sent three different embassies; the first to the lord of the state which had given offence, requiring from him a suitable satisfaction, and also prescribing a time for the same, on pain of being treated as an enemy; the second, to the nobles, that they might persuade their lord to make a submission, and escape the punishment which threatened him; and the third to the people, in order to make them acquainted with the occasion of the war; and very often, as a certain historian asserts, the arguments made use of by the ambassadors were so powerful, and the advantages of peace, and the distresses of war, were so forcibly represented, that an accommodation took place between the parties. They used also to send along with ambassadors the idol of Huitzilopochtli, enjoining the people who were stirring up a war to give it a place among their gods. If they on the one hand found themselves strong enough to resist, they rejected the proposition, and dismissed the strange god; but if they thought themselves unable to sustain a war, they received the idol, and placed it among their provincial gods, and answered to the embassy with a large present of gold, gems, or beautiful feathers, acknowledging their subjection to the sovereign.

If war was to be commenced, previous to every thing else they sent advice of it to the enemy, that they might prepare for defence, considering nothing more mean and unworthy of brave people than to attack the unguarded: for this purpose therefore, they sent before them several shields, which were the signals of a challenge, and likewise some cotton dresses. When one king was challenged by another, they used also the ceremony of anointing, and fixing feathers upon his head, which was done by the ambassador, as happened at the challenge given by king Itzcoatl to the tyrant Maxtlaton; they next dispatched spies, who were called *Quimichtin*, or forcerers, and were to go in disguise into the country of the enemy, to observe their number and motions, and the quality of the troops which they mustered. If they were successful in this commission they were amply rewarded. Lastly, after having made some sacrifices to the god of war, and to the tutelar deities of the state or city on which the war was made, in order to merit their protection, the army marched, but not formed into wings, or ranked  
in

in files, but divided into companies, each of which had its leader, and its standard. When the army was numerous it was reckoned by *Xiquipilli*; and each *xiquipilli* consisted of eight thousand men. It is extremely probable, that each of these bodies was commanded by a Tlacatecatl, or other general. The place where the first battle was usually fought was a field appointed for that purpose in some province, and called *Jaotlalli*, or land or field of battle. They began battle (as was usual in ancient Europe, and among the Romans), with a most terrible noise of warlike instruments, shouting and whistling, which struck terror to those who were not accustomed to hear it, as the anonymous conqueror declares from his own experience. Amongst the people of Tezcuco, and likewise, most probably, amongst those of other states, the king, or the general, gave the signal for battle, by the beat of a little drum which hung at his shoulder. Their first onset was furious; but they did not all engage at once, as some authors have reported; for they were accustomed, as is manifest from their history, to keep troops in reserve, for pressing emergencies. Sometimes they began battle with shooting arrows, and sometimes with darts and slinging of stones; and when their arrows were exhausted, they made use of their pikes, clubs, and swords. They were extremely attentive to keep their troops united and firmly together, to defend the standard, and to carry off the dead and the wounded from the sight of the enemy. There were certain men of the army who had no other employment than to remove from the eyes of the enemy every object which could heighten their courage and inflame their pride. They made frequent use of ambuscades, concealing themselves in bushy places or ditches made on purpose, of which the Spaniards had often experience; and frequently also they pretended flight, in order to lead the enemy in pursuit of them into some dangerous situation, or to charge them behind with fresh troops. Their great aim in battle was not to kill, but to make prisoners of their enemies for sacrifices; nor was the bravery of a soldier estimated by the number of dead bodies which he left on the field, but by the number of prisoners which he presented to the general after the battle, and this was unquestionably the principal cause of the preservation of the Spaniards, in the midst of the dangers to which they were exposed, and



## BOOK VII.

particularly on that memorable night when they were defeated, and obliged to retreat from the capital. When an enemy, whom they had once conquered, attempted to save himself by flight, they hamstringing him to prevent his escape. When the standard of the army was taken by the enemy, or their general fell, they all fled, nor was it possible then by any human art to rally or recall them.

When the battle was over, the victors celebrated the victory with great rejoicings, and rewarded the officers and soldiers who had made some prisoners. When the king of Mexico in person, took an enemy prisoner, embassies came from all the provinces of the kingdom to congratulate him upon the occasion, and to offer him some present. This prisoner was clothed with the finest habits, adorned with jewels, and carried in a litter to the capital, where the citizens came out to meet him, with music and loud acclamations. When the day of the sacrifice arrived, the king having fasted the day before, according to the custom of owners of prisoners, they carried the royal prisoner, adorned with the ensigns of the sun, to the altar for common sacrifices, where he was sacrificed by the high-priest. The priest sprinkled his blood towards the four principal winds, and sent a vessel full of the same to the king, who ordered it to be sprinkled on all the idols within the inclosure of the greater temple, as a token of thanks for the victory obtained over the enemies of the state. They hung up the head in some very lofty place, and after the skin of the body was dried, they filled it with cotton, and hung it up in the royal palace, in memory of the glorious deed; in which circumstance however, their adulation to him was conspicuous.

When any city was to be besieged, the greatest anxiety of the citizens was to secure their children, their women, and sick persons; for which purpose they sent them off, at an early opportunity, to another city, or to the mountains. Thus they saved those defenceless individuals from the fury of the enemy, and obviated an unnecessary consumption of provisions.

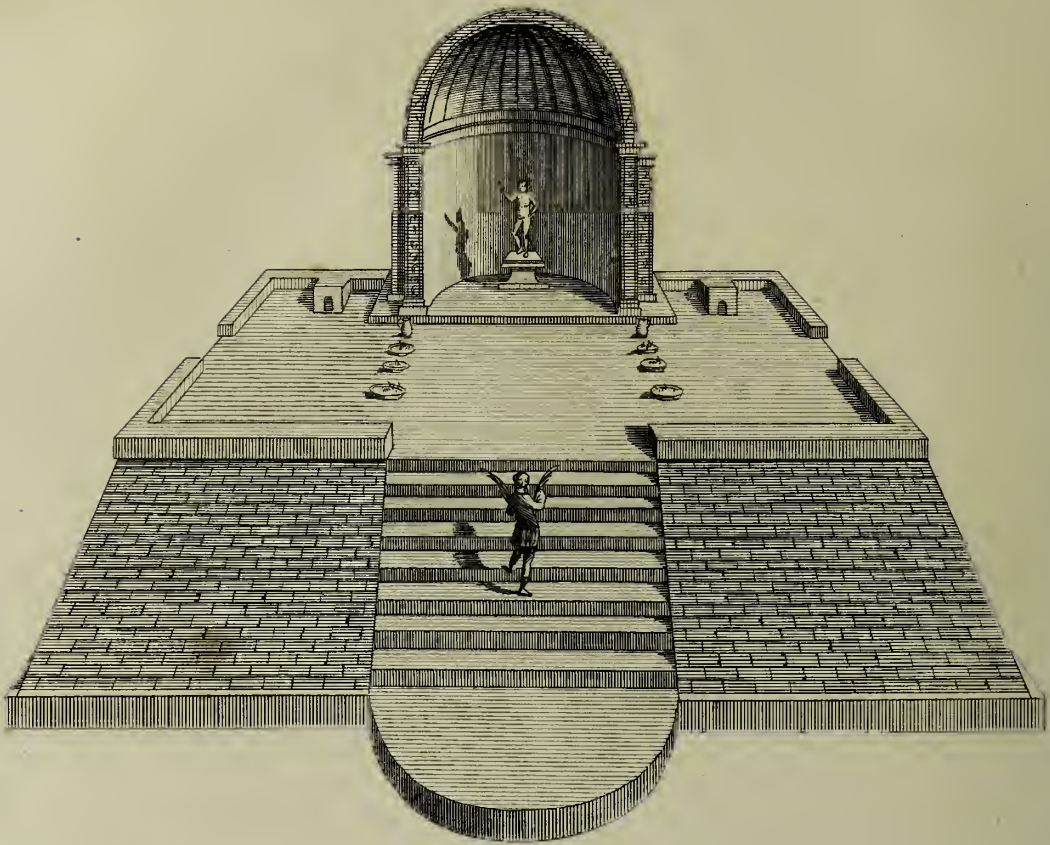
SECT.  
XXVI.  
Fortifications.

For the defence of places they made use of various kinds of fortifications, such as walls, and ramparts, with their breast-works, palisades, ditches, and intrenchments. Concerning the city of Quauhquechollan,

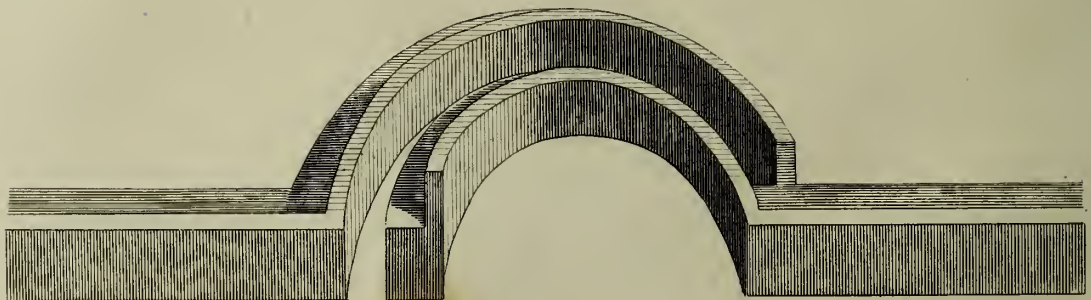




*Another form of Temple.*



*Entrance of the Tlascalan Territories.*



chollan, we know that it was fortified by a strong stone wall, about twenty-feet high, and twelve feet in thickness (*i*). BOOK VII.

The conquerors, who describe to us the fortifications of this city, make mention likewise of several others, among which is the celebrated wall which the Tlascalans built on the eastern boundaries of the republic, to defend themselves from the invasion of the Mexican troops, which were garrisoned in Iztacmaxtitlan, Xocotlan, and other places. This wall, which stretched from one mountain to another, was six miles in length, eight feet in height, besides the breast-work, and eighteen feet in thickness. It was made of stone, and strong fine mortar (*k*). There was but one narrow entrance of about eight feet broad, and forty paces long; this was the space between the two extremities of the wall, the one of which encircled the other, forming two semicircles, with one common centre. This will be better understood from the figure of it which we present to our readers. There are still some remains of this wall to be seen.

There are also to be seen still the remains of an ancient fortress built upon the top of a mountain, at a little distance from the village of Molcaxac, surrounded by four walls, placed at some distance from each other, from the base of the mountain unto the top. In the neighbourhood appear many small ramparts of stone and lime, and upon a hill, two miles distant from that mountain, are the remains of some ancient and populous city, of which, however, there is no memory among historians. About twenty-five miles from Cordova, towards the north, is likewise the ancient fortress of *Quauhatocho*, (now *Guatusco*), surrounded by high walls of extremely hard stone, to which there is no entrance but by ascending a number of very high and narrow steps; for in this manner the entrance to their fortresses was formed. From among the ruins of this ancient building, which is now over-run with bushes, through the negligence of those people, a Cordovan gentleman lately dug out several well-finished statues of stone,

(*i*) In the ninth book we shall give a description of the fortifications of Quauhquechollan.

(*k*) Bernal Dias says, that the Tlascalan wall was built of stone and lime, and with a bitumen so strong it was necessary to use pick-axes to undo it. Cortes, on the other hand affirms, that it was built of dry stones. We are disposed rather to give credit to Bernal Dias; because he asserts, he had attentively examined this wall, although like an illiterate person, he gives the name of bitumen to the mortar or cement made use of by those nations.



BOOK VII. for the ornament of his house. Near to the ancient court of Tezcucó,  
 a part of the wall which surrounded the city of Coatlichan, is still preserved. We wish that our countrymen would attend to the preservation of those few remains of the military architecture of the Mexicans, particularly as they have suffered so many other valuable remains of their antiquity to go to ruin (1).

The capital of Mexico, though sufficiently fortified by its natural situation for those times, was rendered impregnable to its enemies by the industry of its inhabitants. There was no access to the city but by the roads formed upon the lake; and to make it still more difficult in time of war, they built many ramparts upon these roads, which were intersected with several deep ditches, over which they had draw-bridges, and those ditches were defended by good entrenchments. Those ditches were the graves of many Spaniards and Tlascalans, on the memorable night of the first of July, of which we shall speak hereafter; and the cause which retarded the taking of that great city, by so numerous and well equipped an army, as that which Cortes employed to besiege it; and which, had he not been assisted by the brigantines, would have delayed it much longer, and occasioned the loss of a great deal more blood. For the defence of the city by water, they had many thousand small vessels, and frequently exercised themselves in naval engagements.

But the most singular fortifications of Mexico were the temples themselves, and especially the greater temple, which resembled a citadel. The wall which surrounded the whole of the temple, the five arsenals there which were filled with every sort of offensive and defensive arms, and the architecture of the temple itself which rendered the ascent to it so difficult, gives us clearly to understand, that in such buildings, policy, as well as religion, had a share; and that they constructed them, not only from motives of superstition, but likewise for the purpose of defence. It is well known from their history, that they fortified themselves in their temples when they could not hinder the

(1) These imperfect accounts of those remains of Mexican antiquities, obtained from eye-witnesses worthy of the utmost credit, persuade us, that there are still many more of which we have no knowledge, owing to the indolence and neglect of our countrymen. See what is said in our dissertations respecting those antiquities against Sig. de P. and Dr. Robertson.

enemy,

enemy from entering into the city, and from thence harraffed them with arrows, darts, and stones. In the last book of this history, will appear how long the Spaniards were in taking the greater temple, where five hundred Mexican nobles had fortified themselves.

The high esteem in which the Mexicans held every thing relating to war, did not divert their attention from the arts of peace. First, agriculture, which is one of the chief occupations of civil life, was, from time immemorial, exercised by the Mexicans, and almost all the people of Anahuac. The Toltecan nation employed themselves diligently in it, and taught it to the Chechemecan hunters. With respect to the Mexicans, we know that during the whole of their peregrination, from their native country Aztlan, unto the lake where they founded Mexico, they cultivated the earth in all those places where they made any considerable stop, and lived upon the produce of their labour. When they were brought under subjection to the Colhuan and Tepanecan nations, and confined to the miserable little islands on the lake, they ceased for some years to cultivate the land, because they had none, until necessity, and industry together, taught them to form moveable fields and gardens, which floated on the waters of the lake. The method which they pursued to make those, and which they still practise, is extremely simple.

They plait and twist willows, and roots of marsh plants, or other materials together, which are light, but capable of supporting the earth of the garden firmly united. Upon this foundation they lay the light bushes which float on the lake, and over all, the mud and dirt which they draw up from the bottom of the same lake. Their regular figure is quadrangular; their length and breadth various; but as far as we can judge, they are about eight perches long, and not more than three in breadth, and have less than a foot of elevation above the surface of the water. These were the first fields which the Mexicans owned after the foundation of Mexico; there they first cultivated the maize, great pepper, and other plants, necessary for their support. In progress of time as those fields grew numerous from the industry of those people there were among them gardens of flowers and odoriferous plants, which were employed in the worship of their gods, and served for the recreation of the nobles. At present they cultivate flowers, and every sort of garden

SECT.  
XXVII.  
Floating  
fields and  
gardens of  
the Mexican  
lake.



BOOK VII. den herbs upon them. Every day of the year, at sun-rise, innumerable vessels loaded with various kinds of flowers and herbs, which are cultivated in those gardens are seen arriving by the canal, at the great market-place of that capital. All plants thrive there surprisingly; the mud of the lake is an extremely fertile soil, and requires no water from the clouds. In the largest gardens there is commonly a little tree, and even a little hut to shelter the cultivator, and defend him from rain, or the sun. When the owner of a garden, or the *Cbinampa*, as he is usually called, wishes to change his situation, to remove from a disagreeable neighbour, or to come nearer to his own family, he gets into his little vessel, and by his own strength alone, if the garden is small, or with the assistance of others, if it is large, he tows it after him, and conducts it wherever he pleases with the little tree and hut upon it. That part of the lake where those floating gardens are, is a place of infinite recreation where the senses receive the highest possible gratification.

SECT.  
XXVIII.  
Manner of  
cultivating  
the earth.

As soon as the Mexicans had shaken of the Tepanecan yoke, and had gained by their conquests lands fit for cultivation, they applied themselves with great diligence to agriculture. Having neither ploughs, nor oxen, nor any other animals proper to be employed in the culture of the earth, they supplied the want of them by labour, and other more simple instruments. To hoe and dig the ground they made use of the *Coatl* (or *Coa*), which is an instrument made of copper, with a wooden handle, but different from a spade or mattock. They made use of an axe to cut trees, which was also made of copper, and was of the same form with those of modern times, except that we put the handle in the eye of the axe, whereas they put the axe into an eye of the handle. They had several other instruments of agriculture; but the negligence of ancient writers on this subject has not left it in our power to attempt their description.

For the refreshment of their fields they made use of the water of rivers and small torrents which came from the mountains, raising dams to collect them, and forming canals to conduct them. Lands which were high, or on the declivity of mountains, were not sown every year, but allowed to lie fallow until they were over-run with bushes, which they burned, to repair by their ashes, the salt which rains had washed away. They surrounded their fields with stone inclosures, or hedges made of the *metl*, or aloe, which make an excellent fence; and in the month

*Common Man & Woman of Mexico.*







month Panquetzaliztli, which began, as we have already mentioned, on the third of December, they were repaired if necessary (*m*). BOOK VII.

The method they observed in sowing of maize, and which they still practise in some places, is this. The sower makes a small hole in the earth, with a stick or drill probably, the point of which is hardened by fire; into this hole he drops one or two grains of maize from a basket which hangs from his shoulder, and covers them with a little earth by means of his foot; he then passes forward to a certain distance, which is greater or less according to the quality of the soil, opens another hole, and continues so in a strait line unto the end of the field; from thence he returns, forming another line parallel to the first. The rows of plants by these means are as strait as if a line was made use of, and at as equal distances from each other as if the spaces between were measured. This method of sowing, which is now used by a few of the Indians only, though more slow (*n*), is, however of some advantage, as they can more exactly proportion the quantity of seed to the strength of the soil; besides, that there is almost none of the seed lost which is sown. In consequence of this, the crops of the fields which are cultivated in that manner are usually more plentiful. When the maize springs up to a certain height, they cover the foot of the plant round with earth; that it may be better nourished, and more able to withstand sudden gusts of wind.

In the labours of the field the men were assisted by the women. It was the business of the men to dig and hoe the ground, to sow, to heap the earth about the plants, and to reap; to the women it belonged to strip off the leaves from the ears, and to clear the grain; to weed and to shell it was the employment of both.

They had places like farm yards, where they stripped off the leaves from the ears, and shelled them, and granaries to preserve the grain. Their granaries were built in a square form, and generally of wood. They made use of the *ojametl* for this purpose, which is a very lofty tree, with but a few slender branches, and a thin smooth bark; the wood of it is extremely pliant, and difficult to break or rot. These

SECT.  
XXIX.  
Threshing-  
floors and  
granaries.

(*m*) This is called a *penguin fence* in Jamaica, and the windward islands.

(*n*) This manner of sowing is not so slow as might be imagined, as the country people used to this method do it with wonderful quickness.



BOOK VII. granaries were formed by placing the round and equal trunks of the *ojametl* in a square, one upon the other, without any labour except that of a small notch towards their extremities, to adjust and unite them so perfectly as not to suffer any passage to the light. When the structure was raised to a sufficient height, they covered it with another set of cross-beams, and over these the roof was laid to defend the grain from rains. Those granaries had no other door or outlet than two windows, one below which was small, and another somewhat wider above. Some of them were so large as to contain five or six thousand, or sometimes more *fanegas* (o) of maize. There are some of this sort of granaries to be met with in a few places at a distance from the capital, and amongst them some so very ancient, that they appear to have been built before the conquest; and, according to the information we have had from persons of intelligence, they preserve the grain better than those which are constructed by the Europeans.

Close to fields which were sown they commonly erected a little tower of wood, branches and mats, in which a man defended from the sun and rain kept watch, and drove away the birds which came in flocks to consume the young grain. Those little towers are still made use of even in the fields of the Spaniards on account of the excessive number of birds.

SECT. XXX.  
Kitchen and  
other gardens  
and woods.

The Mexicans were also extremely well skilled in the cultivation of kitchen and other gardens, in which they planted with great regularity and taste, fruit-trees, and medicinal plants and flowers. The last of those were much in demand, not less on account of the particular pleasure taken in them, than of the custom which prevailed of presenting bunches of flowers to their kings, lords, ambassadors, and other persons of rank, besides the excessive quantity which were made use of in the temples and private oratories. Amongst the ancient gardens, of which an account has been handed down to us, the royal gardens of Mexico and Tezcuco, which we have already mentioned, and those of the lords of Iztapalapan and Huaxtepec, have been much celebrated. Among the gardens of the great palace of the lord of Iztapalapan, there was one, the extent, disposition, and beauty of which excited the

(o) A Castilian measure of dry goods, formerly mentioned by us.

admiration of the Spanish conquerors. It was laid out in four squares, and planted with every variety of trees, the sight and scent of which gave infinite pleasure to the senses; through those squares a number of roads and paths led, some formed by fruit-bearing trees, and others by espaliers of flowering shrubs and aromatic herbs. Several canals from the lake watered it, by one of which their barges could enter. In the centre of the garden was a fish-pond, the circumference of which measured sixteen hundred paces, or four hundred from side to side, where innumerable water-fowl resorted, and there were steps on every side to descend to the bottom. This garden, agreeable to the testimony of Cortes and Diaz, who saw it, was planted, or rather extended and improved by Cuitlahuatzin, the brother and successor in the kingdom to Montezuma II. He caused many foreign trees to be transplanted there, according to the account of Hernandez, who saw them.

The garden of Huaxtepec was still more extensive and celebrated than the last. It was six miles in circumference, and watered by a beautiful river which crossed it. Innumerable species of trees and plants were reared there and beautifully disposed, and at proper distances from each other different pleasure houses were erected. A great number of strange plants imported from foreign countries were collected in it. The Spaniards for many years preserved this garden, where they cultivated every kind of medicinal herb belonging to that clime, for the use of the hospital which they founded there, in which the remarkable hermit, Gregorio Lopez, served a number of years (*p*).

They paid no less attention to the preservation of the woods which supplied them with fuel to burn, timber to build, and game for the diversion of the king. We have formerly mentioned the woods of

(*p*) Cortes, in his letter to Charles V. of the 15th of May, 1522, told him, that the garden of Huaxtepec was the most extensive, the most beautiful, and most delightful which had ever been beheld. Bernal Dias, in chap. cxlii. of his history says, that the garden was most wonderful, and truly worthy of a great prince. Hernandez frequently makes mention of it in his Natural History, and names several plants which were transplanted there, and amongst others the balsam-tree. Cortes also, in his letter to Charles V. of the 30th of October, 1520, relates, that having requested king Montezuma to cause a villa to be made in Malinaltepec for that emperor, two months were hardly elapsed when there were erected at that place four good houses; sixty fanegas of maize sown, ten of French beans, two thousand feet of ground planted with cacao, and a vast pond, where five hundred ducks were breeding, and fifteen hundred turkeys were rearing in houses.



BOOK VII. king Montezuma, and the laws of king Nezahualcojotl concerning the cutting of them. It would be of advantage to that kingdom, that those laws were still in force, or at least that there was not so much liberty granted in cutting without an obligation to plant a certain number of trees; as many people preferring their private interest and convenience to the public welfare, destroy the wood in order to enlarge their possessions (7).

SECT.  
XXXI.  
Plants most  
cultivated by  
the Mexi-  
cans.

Among the plants most cultivated by the Mexicans next to maize, the principal were those of cotton, the cacao, the *metl*, or aloe, the chia, and great pepper, on account of the various uses which they made of them. The aloe, or maguei alone, yielded almost every thing necessary to the life of the poor. Besides making excellent hedges for their fields, its trunk served in place of beams for the roofs of their houses, and its leaves instead of tiles. From those leaves they obtained paper, thread, needles, clothing, shoes, and stockings, and cordage; and from its copious juice they made wine, honey, sugar, and vinegar. Of the trunk, and thickest part of the leaves, when well baked, they made a very tolerable dish of food. Lastly, it was a powerful medicine in several disorders, and particularly in those of the urine. It is also at present one of the plants the most valued and most profitable to the Spaniards, as we shall see hereafter.

SECT.  
XXXII.  
Animals bred  
by the Mexi-  
cans.

With respect to the breeding of animals, which is an employment associated with agriculture, although among the Mexicans there were no shepherds, they having been entirely destitute of sheep, they bred up innumerable species of animals unknown in Europe. Private persons brought up *techichis*, quadrupeds, as we have already mentioned, similar to little dogs; turkeys, quails, geese, ducks, and other kinds of fowl. In the houses of lords were bred fish, deer, rabbits, and a variety of birds; and in the royal palaces, almost all the species of quadrupeds, and winged animals of those countries, and a prodigious number of water animals and reptiles. We may say, that in this kind of magnificence Montezuma II. surpassed all the kings of the world, and that there never has been a nation equal in skill to the Mexicans in the

(7) Many places still feel the pernicious effects of the liberty to cut the woods. The city Queretaro was formerly provided with timber for building from the wood which was upon the neighbouring mountain *Cimatario*. At present it is obliged to be brought from a great distance, as the mountain is entirely stripped of its wood.

care.

care of so many different species of animals, which had so much knowledge of their dispositions, of the food which was most proper for each, and of all the means necessary for their preservation and increase.

Among the animals reared by the Mexicans, no one is more worthy of mention than the *nochiztli*, or Mexican cochineal, described by us in our first book. This insect, so greatly valued in Europe on account of its dyes, and especially those of scarlet and crimson, being not only extremely delicate, but also persecuted by several enemies, demands a great deal more care from the breeders than is necessary for the silk-worm. Rain, cold, and strong winds destroy it. Birds, mice, and worms, persecute it furiously and devour it; hence it is necessary to keep the rows of opuntia, or nopal, where those insects are bred always clean; to attend constantly to drive away the birds which are destructive to them, to make nests of hay for them in the leaves of the opuntia, by the juice of which they are nourished, and when the season of rain approaches, to raise them from the plants together with the leaves, and guard them in houses. Before the females are delivered they cast their skin, to obtain which spoil the breeders make use of the tail of the rabbit, brushing most gently with it that they may not detach the insects from the leaves, or do them any hurt. On every leaf they make three nests, and in every nest they lay about fifteen cochineals. Every year they make three gatherings, reserving however each time a certain number for the future generation; but the last gathering is least valued, the cochineals being smaller then, and mixed with the shavings of the opuntia. They kill the cochineal most commonly with hot water. On the manner of drying it afterwards the quality of the colour which is obtained from it chiefly depends. The best is that which is dried in the sun. Some dry it in the *comalli*, or pan, in which they bake their bread of maize, and others in the *temazcalli*, a sort of oven, of which we shall speak elsewhere.

The Mexicans would not have been able to assemble so many sorts of animals, if they had not had great dexterity in the exercise of the chace. They made use of the bow and arrow, darts, nets, snares, and *Cerbottane*\*. The cerbottane which the kings and principal lords made

SECT.  
XXXII.  
Chace of the  
Mexicans.

\* *Cerbottane*, are long tubes, or pipes, through which they shoot, by blowing with the mouth little balls at birds, &c.



## BOOK VII.

use of were curiously carved and painted, and likewise adorned with gold and silver. Besides the exercise of the chace which private individuals took either for amusement, or to provide food for themselves, there were general chaces, which were either those established by custom to procure a plenty of victims for sacrifices, or others occasionally appointed by the king. For this general chace they fixed on a large wood, which was generally that of Zacatepec, not far distant from the capital; there they chose the place most adapted for setting a great number of snares and nets. With some thousands of hunters they formed a circle round the wood of six, seven, eight, or more miles, according to the number of animals they intended to take: they set fire every where to the dry grass and herbs, and made a terrible noise with drums, horns, shouting, and whistling. The animals, alarmed by the noise and the fire, fled to the centre of the wood, which was the very place where the snares were set. The hunters approached towards the same spot, and still continuing their noise, gradually contracted their circle, until they left but a very small space to the game, which they all then attacked with their arms. Some of the animals were killed, and some were taken alive in the snares, or in the hands of the hunters. The number and variety of game which they took was so great, that the first viceroy of Mexico, when he was told of it, thought it so incredible, that he desired to make experience of the method himself. For the field of the chace, he made choice of a great plain which lies in the country of the Otomies, between the villages of Xilotepec and *S. Giovanni del Rio*, and ordered the Indians to proceed in the same manner as they had been used to do in the time of their paganism. The viceroy, with a great retinue of Spaniards repaired to the plain, where accommodations were prepared for them in houses built of wood, erected there on purpose. Eleven thousand Otomies formed a circle of more than fifteen miles, and after practising all the means above mentioned, assembled such a quantity of game on the plain, that the viceroy, who was quite astonished at the sight, commanded that the greater part of them should be set at liberty, which was accordingly done; notwithstanding the number of animals taken would be altogether incredible, if the circumstance had not been publicly known and attested by many, and among others by a witness worthy of the highest credit.

credit (*r*). They killed more than six hundred deer and wild goats, upwards of a hundred *cojotés*, and a surprising number of hares, rabbits, and other quadrupeds. The plain still retains the Spanish name *Cazadero*, or place of the chase, which was then given it.

Besides the usual method of practising the chase, they had other particular devices for catching particular kinds of animals. In order to catch young apes, they made a small fire in the woods, and put among the burning coals a particular kind of stone which they called *Cacalo-tetl*, (raven, or black stone), which bursts with a loud noise when it is well heated. They covered the fire with earth, and sprinkled around it a little maize. The apes, allured by the grain, assembled about it with their young, and while they were peaceably eating, the stone burst; the old apes fled away in terror leaving their young behind them; the hunters, who were on the watch, then seized them before their dams could return to carry them off.

The method also which they had, and still use, to catch ducks, is artful and curious. The lakes of the Mexican vale, as well as others of the kingdom, are frequented by a prodigious multitude of ducks, geese, and other aquatic birds. The Mexicans left some empty gourds to float upon the water, where those birds resorted, that they might be accustomed to see and approach them without fear. The bird-catcher went into the water so deep as to hide his body, and covered his head with a gourd; the ducks came to peck at it, and then he pulled them by the feet under water, and in this manner secured as many as he pleased.

They took serpents alive either by twisting them with great dexterity, or approaching them intrepidly, they seized them with one hand by the neck, and sewed up their mouths with the other. They still take them in this way, and every day in the apothecary's shops of the capital, and other cities, may be seen live serpents which have been taken in this manner.

But nothing is more wonderful than their quickness in tracing the steps of wild beasts. Although there is not the smallest print of them to be seen from the earth being covered with herbs or dry leaves which

(*r*) P. Toribio di Benaventi, or Motolinia.



## BOOK VII.

fall from the trees, they still track them, particularly if they are wounded, by observing most attentively sometimes the drops of blood which fall upon the leaves as they pass, sometimes the herbs which are broken or beat down by their feet (*s*).

SECT.  
XXXIV.  
Fishing.

From the situation of their capital, and its vicinity to the lake of Chalco, which abounded with fish, the Mexicans were still more invited to fishing than the chase. They employed themselves in it from the time of their arrival in that country, and their art in fishing procured them all other necessaries. The instruments which they most commonly made use of in fishing were nets, but they also employed hooks, harpoons, and weals.

The fishers not only caught fish, but even took crocodiles in two different methods. One was by tying them by the neck, which, as Hernandez asserts, was very common; but this author does not explain the manner in which they performed an act so daring against so terrible a creature. The other method, which is still used by some, was that which the Egyptians formerly practised on the famous crocodiles of the Nile. The fisher presented himself before the crocodile, carrying in his hand a strong stick, well sharpened at both ends, and when the animal opened its mouth to devour him, he thrust his armed hand into its jaws, and as the crocodile shut its mouth again, it was transfixed by the two points of the stick. The fisher waited until it grew feeble from the loss of blood, and then he killed it.

SECT.  
XXXV.  
Commerce.

Fishing, hunting, agriculture, and the arts, furnished the Mexicans several branches of commerce. Their commerce in the country of Anahuac began as soon as they were settled upon the little islands in the Tezcucan lake. The fish which they caught, and the mats which they wove of rushes which the same lake produces, was exchanged for maize, cotton, stones, lime, and the wood, which they required for their support, for their clothing, and their buildings. In proportion to the power which their arms acquired, their commerce increased; so that from having been at first confined to the environs of their own

(*s*) The account which we have of the Taramarese, the Opates, and other nations beyond the Tropic, when pursued by their enemies the Apacci, is still more wonderful; for by the touch and observations of the footsteps of their enemies, they can tell the time at which they passed there. The same thing we understand is reported of the people of Yucatan.

city, it extended at last to the most distant provinces. There were innumerable Mexican merchants, who incessantly travelled from one city to another to exchange their goods to advantage. In every place of the Mexican empire, and of all the extensive country of Anahuac, a market was opened every day; but every five days they held one which was more considerable and general. Cities which were near together had this market on different days, that they might not prejudice each other; but in the capital it was kept on the days of the House, the Rabbit, the Reed, and the Flint, which, in the first year of the century, were the third, the eighth, the thirteenth, and eighteenth of every month.

In order to convey some idea of those markets, or rather fairs, which have been so much celebrated by the historians of Mexico, it will be sufficient to describe that held in the capital. Until the time of king Axajacatl, it was kept in a space of ground before the royal palace; but after the conquest of Tlatelolco, it was removed to that quarter. The public place of Tlatelolco was, according to the account of the conqueror Cortes, twice as large as that of Salamanca, one of the most famous in Spain (*t*), and surrounded by porticos for the convenience of the merchants. Every sort of merchandize had a particular place allotted to it by the judges of commerce. In one station were goods of gold, and silver, and jewels; in another, manufactures of cotton; in another, those of feathers, and so forth; and no change of situation was allowed to any of them; but although the square was very large, as all the merchandizes could not be lodged in it without interrupting the transaction of business, it was ordered that all large goods, such as beams, stones, &c. should be left in the roads and canals near to the market-place. The number of merchants who daily assembled there, according to the affirmation of Cortes himself, exceeded fifty thousand (*u*). The things which were sold or exchanged there, were so

(*t*) In three editions of the letters of Cortes which we have seen, we have read, that the square of Tlatelolco was *twice as large as the city of Salamanca*, whereas it ought to read, *as that of the city of Salamanca*.

(*u*) Although Cortes affirmed that there assembled daily in the market-place of Tlatelolco fifty thousand people, it appears that it ought to be understood of the great market which was held every five days; for the anonymous conqueror, who speaks more distinctly of it, says, that at the markets there were from twenty to twenty-five thousand, but at the great markets from forty to fifty thousand.



## BOOK VII.

numerous and so various, that historians who saw them, after making a long and tedious enumeration, conclude with saying, it is impossible to express them all. Without contradicting their assertion, and to avoid prolixity, we will endeavour to comprehend them in a few words. To that square were carried to be sold or exchanged all the productions of the Mexican empire, or adjacent countries, which could serve for the necessities of life, the convenience, the luxuries, the vanity, or curiosity of man (*x*); innumerable species of animals, both dead and alive, every sort of eatable which was in use amongst them, all the metals and gems which were known to them, all the medicinal drugs and simples, herbs, gum, resins, and mineral earths, as well as the medicines prepared by their physicians, such as beverages, electaries, oils, plasters, ointments, &c. and every sort of manufacture and work of the thread of the metl, maguei, or aloe, of the mountain palm, of cotton, of feathers, of the hair of animals, of wood, of stone, of gold, silver, and copper. They sold there also slaves, and even whole vessels, laden with human dung, for dressing the skins of animals. In short, they sold in that square every thing which could be sold in all that city; for they had no mart elsewhere, nor was any thing sold out of the market-place except eatables. The potters and jewellers of Cholula, the goldsmiths of Azcapozalco, the painters of Tezcuco, the stone-cutters of Tenajocan, the hunters of Xilotepec, the fishers of Cuiclahuac, the fruiterers of hot countries, the mat-weavers and chair-makers of Quauhtitlan, and florists of Xochimilco, all assembled there.

SECT.  
XXXVI.  
Money.

Their commerce was not only carried on by way of exchange, as many authors report, but likewise by means of real purchase and sale. They had five kinds of real money, though it was not coined, which served them as a price to purchase whatever they wanted. The first was a certain species of cacao, different from that which they used in their daily drink, which was in constant circulation through the hands of traders, as our money is amongst us. They counted the cacao by *Xiquepilli*, (this as we have before observed, was equal to eight thousand),

(*x*) Whoever will take the trouble to read the description which Cortes, Bernal Diaz, and the anonymous conqueror have given of their market, will be convinced there is no exaggeration made here of the variety of their merchandizes.

and to save the trouble of counting them when the merchandize was of great value, they reckoned them by sacks, every sack having been reckoned to contain three *xiquipilli*, or twenty-four thousand nuts. The second kind of money was certain small cloths of cotton, which they called *patolquachtli*, as being solely destined for the purchase of merchandizes which were immediately necessary. The third species of money was gold in dust, contained in goose-quills, which, by being transparent, shewed the precious metal which filled them, and in proportion to their size were of greater or less value. The fourth, which most resembled coined money, was made of pieces of copper in the form of a T, and was employed in purchases of little value. The fifth, of which mention is made by Cortes, in his last letter to the emperor Charles the Vth, consisted of thin pieces of tin.

They sold and exchanged merchandizes by number and measure; but we do know that they made use of weights, either because they thought them liable to frauds, as some authors have said, or because they did not find them necessary, as others have affirmed, or because if they did use them the Spaniards never knew it (*y*).

To prevent fraudulent contracts and disorder amongst the traders, there were certain commissioners who were continually traversing the market to observe what happened, and a tribunal of commerce, composed of twelve judges, residing in a house of the square, was appointed to decide all disputes between traders, and take cognizance of all trespasses committed in the market-place. Of all the goods which were brought into the market, a certain portion was paid in tribute to the king, who was on his part obliged to do justice to the merchants, and to protect their property and their persons. A theft seldom happened in the market, on account of the vigilance of the king's officers, and the severity with which it was instantly punished. But it is not the least surprising, that theft was so rigorously punished, where the smallest disorders were never pardoned. The laborious and most

SECT.  
XXXVII.  
Regulations  
of the mar-  
ket.

(*y*) Gomara believed, that the Mexicans made no use of scales or weights; because they were ignorant of such a contrivance; but it is very improbable, that a nation so industrious and commercial should not have known the manner of ascertaining the weight of goods, when among other nations of America, less acute than the Mexicans, stilyards were made use of, according to the report of the same author, to weigh gold. Of how many circumstances relative to American antiquity are we still ignorant, owing to the want of proper examination and enquiry!



## BOOK VII.

sincere F. Motolinia relates, that a quarrel having arisen once between two women in the market of Tezcuco, and one of them having gone so far as to beat the other with her hands, and occasion the loss of some blood, to the amazement of the people, who were not accustomed to see such an outrage committed there, she was immediately condemned to death for the offence. All the Spaniards who saw those markets extolled them with the highest praises, and were unable to express in words the admirable disposition, and the wonderful order which was maintained among so great a multitude of merchants and merchandizes.

The markets of Tezcuco, Tlascala, Cholula, Huexotzinco, and other large places, were ordered in the same manner as that of Mexico. At the market of Tlascala, Cortes affirms, more than thirty thousand merchants and others assembled (z). At that of Tepeyacac, which was not one of the largest cities, Motolinia above mentioned says, he has known twenty-four years after the conquest, when the commerce of those people was greatly declined, that at the market held every five days, there were not less than eight thousand European hens sold, and that as many were sold at the market of Acapitlayocan.

SECT.  
XXXVIII.  
Custom of  
the mer-  
chants in  
their jour-  
nies.

When young merchants were desirous of undertaking a long journey, they gave an entertainment to the old merchants, who were no longer able on account of their age to travel, and also to their own relations; and informed them of their design, and the motive which induced them to travel into distant countries.

Those who were invited praised their resolution, encouraged them to follow the steps of their ancestors, particularly if it was their first journey which they were going to perform, and gave several advices to them how they were to conduct themselves. In general, many of them travelled together for greater safety. Each of them carried in his hand a smooth black stick, which, as they said, was the image of their god Jacateuctli, with which they imagined themselves secure against all the dangers of the journey. As soon as they arrived at any house where they made a halt, they assembled and tied all the sticks together and worshipped them; and twice or thrice, during the night, they drew

(z) That which Cortes has said respecting the number of merchants and dealers which assembled at the market of Tlascala, ought most probably to be understood of the market of every five days, in the same manner as we have observed above respecting that of Mexico.

blood from themselves in honour of that god. All the time that a merchant was absent from home, his wife and children did not wash their heads, although they bathed, excepting once every eighty days, not only to testify their regret of his absence, but also by that species of mortification to procure the protection of their gods. When any of the merchants died on their journey, advice of his death was immediately sent to the oldest merchants of his native country, and they communicated it to his relations and kindred, who immediately formed an imperfect statue of wood to represent the deceased, to which they paid all the funeral honours which they would have done to the real dead body.

For the convenience of merchants, and other travellers, there were public roads, which were repaired every year after the rainy season. They had likewise in the mountains and uninhabited places, houses erected for the reception of travellers, and bridges, and other vessels for passing rivers. Their vessels were oblong and flat-bottomed, without keel, masts, or sails, or any other thing to guide them but oars. They were of various sizes. The smallest could hardly hold two or three people, the largest could carry upwards of thirty. Many of them were made of one single trunk of a tree. The number of those which were continually traversing the Mexican lake, exceeded, according to the account of ancient historians fifty thousand. Besides the vessels, or flats, they made use of a particular machine to pass rivers, which was called *valsa*, by the Spaniards of America. This is a square platform, of about five feet, composed of *otatli*, or solid canes, tied firmly upon large, hard, empty gourds. Four, or six passengers seated themselves upon this machine, and were conducted from one side of a river to the other by two or four swimmers, who laid hold of one corner of the machine with one of their hands, and swam with the other. This sort of machine is still used on some rivers distant from the capital, and we ourselves passed a large river on one of them in 1739. It is perfectly safe where the current of the water is equal and smooth, but dangerous in rapid and impetuous rivers.

Their bridges were built either of stone or wood, but those of stone we are of opinion were extremely few in number. The most singular kind of bridge was that to which the Spaniards gave the name of *Hamacaca*. This was a number of the ropes, or natural ligatures of a tree,

more

BOOK VII.

S E C T.  
XXXIX.  
Roads,  
houses for  
the reception  
of travellers,  
vessels, and  
bridges.



## BOOK VII.

more pliant than the willow, but thicker and stronger, called in America *Bejucos*, twisted and wove together, the extremities of which were tied to the trees on each side of rivers, the tress or net formed by them remaining suspended in the air in the manner of a swing (*a*). There are some rivers with such bridges still. The Spaniards durst not pass them, but the Indians pass them with as much confidence and intrepidity as if they were crossing by a stone bridge, perfectly regardless of the undulatory motion of the hamaca, or the depth of the river. But it is to be observed, that the ancient Mexicans having been excellent swimmers, had no need of bridges, unless where from the rapidity of the current, or the weight of some burden, they could not swim across.

The Mexican historians tell us nothing of the maritime commerce of the Mexicans. It is probable that it was very trifling, and that their vessels, which were seen coasting on both seas, were chiefly those of fishermen. Their greatest traffick by water was carried on in the lake of Mexico. All the stone and wood for building, and for fire, the fish, the greater part of the maize, the pulse, fruit, flowers, &c. was brought by water. The commerce of the capital with Tezcucó, Xochimilco, Chalco, Cuitlahuac, and other cities situated upon the lake, was carried on by water, and occasioned that wonderful number of vessels to be employed which we have already mentioned.

SECT. XL.  
Men who  
carried bur-  
dens.

Whatever was not transported by water was carried upon men's backs, and on that account there were numbers of men who carried burdens, called *Tlamama* or *Tlameme*. They were brought up from childhood to this business, which they continued all their lives. A regular load was about sixty pounds, and the length of way they daily walked was fifteen miles; but they made also journeys of two hundred and three hundred miles, travelling frequently over rocky and steep mountains. They were subjected to this intolerable fatigue from the want of beasts of burden; and even at present, although those countries abound in animals of this sort, the Mexicans are still often seen making long journeys with burdens upon their backs. They carried cotton, maize, and other things in *petlacalli*, which were bas-

(*a*) Some bridges are so tight drawn that they have no undulatory motion, and all of them have their side support made of the same parts of the tree.

kets made of a particular kind of cane, and covered with leather, which were light and defended their goods sufficiently from the rain or the sun. These baskets are still a good deal used for journeys by the Spaniards, who corrupt their name into *petacas*. BOOK VII.

The commerce of the Mexicans was by no means embarrassed, either by the multitude or variety of languages which were spoken in those countries; for the Mexican tongue which was the most prevailing, was understood and spoken every where. It was the proper and natural language of the Acolhuas and the Aztecas (*b*), and as we have observed elsewhere, likewise of the Chechemecan and Toltecan nations. SECT. XLI.  
Mexican language.

The Mexican language, of which we wish to give our readers some idea, is entirely destitute of the consonants B, D, F, G, R, and S, and abounds with L, X, T, Z, Tl, Tz; but although the letter L is so familiar to this language, there is not a single word in it beginning with that consonant. Nor is there a word of an acute termination, except some vocatives. Almost all the words have the penult syllable long. Its aspirates are moderate and soft, and there never is occasion to make the least nasal sound in pronunciation.

Notwithstanding the want of those six consonants it is a most copious language; tolerably polished, and remarkably expressive; on which account it has been highly valued and praised by all Europeans who have learned it, so as to be esteemed by many superior to the Latin, and even to the Greek (*c*); but although we know the particular excellencies of the Mexican language, we can never dare to compare it with the last.

Of the copiousness of this language we have an exceeding good demonstration in the Natural History of Hernandez; for in describing twelve hundred plants of the country of Anahuac, two hundred and more species of birds, and a large number of quadrupeds, reptiles, insects, and minerals, he hardly found a single animal, herb, or sub-

(*b*) Boturini says, that the excellence of the language which we call the *Mexican*, was the reason of its being adopted by the Chechemecan, the Mexican, and Teochechemecan nations, and of their relinquishing their native tongue; but besides this opinion being different from that of all other writers, and of the Indians themselves, there are no traces in history of the event of such a change. Where has there ever been a nation known to abandon its native idiom to adopt a better, and particularly a nation so tenacious as the Mexicans, and all the other nations of those countries of their particular language?

(*c*) Among the admirers of the Mexican language there have been some Frenchmen and Flemings, and many Germans, Italians, and Spaniards.

stance,



BOOK VII. stance, without its distinct and proper appellation. But it is not the least surprising, that it abounds in words which signify material objects, when there are hardly any wanting of those which are necessary to express spiritual ideas. The highest mysteries of our religion can be well expressed in Mexican, without any necessity of introducing foreign terms. Acosta wonders, that the Mexicans who had an idea of a supreme Being, creator of heaven and earth, had not also in their language a word to express it equivalent to *Dios* of the Spaniards, *Deus* of the Romans, *Theos* of the Grecians, *El* of the Hebrews, and *Alla* of the Arabs: on which account their preachers were obliged to make use of the Spanish term *Dios*. But if this author had had any knowledge of the Mexican language, he would have known that the *Teotl* of the Mexicans signifies the same thing as the *Theos* of the Greeks, and that there was no other reason for introducing the Spanish word *Dios*, but the excessive scruples of the first missionaries, who, as they burned the historical paintings of the Mexicans, because they suspected them to be full of superstitious meanings, (of which also Acosta himself justly complains), likewise rejected the Mexican word *Teotl*, because it had been used to express the false gods whom they worshipped. But it would have been better to have imitated the example of St. Paul, who, when he found that in Greece the name *Theos* was used to signify certain false deities, more abominable still than those of the Mexicans, did not compel the Greeks to adopt the *El*, or *Adonai*, of the Hebrews, but retained the use of the Greek term, making it be understood from that time, to signify a supreme, eternal, and infinitely perfect Being. However, many discerning men who have wrote in the Mexican language, have not scrupled to make use of the name *Teotl*, in the same manner as they all make use of the *Ipalmemoani*, of the *Tloque Nabuaque*, and other names significative of the Supreme Being, which the Mexicans applied to their invisible God. In one of our Dissertations we shall give a list of the authors who have wrote in the Mexican language on the Christian religion and morality, and also a list of terms, signifying metaphysical and moral ideas, in order to expose the ignorance and weakness of an author (*d*) who has had absurdity enough to publish

(*d*) The author of the work entitled, *Recherches Philosophiques sur les Americains*.

that

that the Mexicans had no words to count above the number three, or to express any metaphysical or moral ideas, and that on account of its harshness no Spaniard had ever learned to pronounce it. We could here give the numeral words of this language, by which the Mexicans could count up to forty-eight millions at least, and could shew how common this language was among the Spaniards, and how well those who have written in it have understood it.

The Mexican language, like the Hebrew and French, wants the superlative term, and like the Hebrew, and most of the living languages of Europe, the comparative term, which are supplied by certain particles equivalent to those which are used in other such languages. It abounds more than the Tuscan in diminutives and augmentatives, and more than the English or any other language we know in verbal and abstract terms; for there is hardly a verb from which there are not many verbals formed, and scarcely a substantive or adjective from which there are not some abstracts formed. It is not less copious in verbs than in nouns; as from every single verb others are derived of different significations. *Cbibua*, is *to do*, *Cbichibua*, *to do with diligence*, or *often*; *Cbibuilia*, *to do to another*; *Cbibualtia*, *to cause to be done*; *Cbibuatiuh*, *to go to do*; *Cbibuaco*, *to come to do*; *Cbiubtiuh*, *to be doing*, &c. We could say a great deal more on the subject, if it was permitted in the rules of history.

The style of address in Mexican varies according to the rank of the persons, with whom, or about whom, conversation is held, adding to the nouns, verbs, prepositions, and adverbs, certain particles expressive of respect: *Tatli*, means *father*; *Amota*, *your father*; *Amotatzin*, *your worthy father*. *Tleco*, is *to ascend*; if a person commands his servant to ascend a certain place, he says simply *Xitleco*; but if he asks some respectable person to do so, he will say *Ximotlicabui*; and if he wishes to use still more ceremony and respect *Maximotlicabuitzino*. This variety, which gives so much civilization to the language, does not, however, make it difficult to be spoken; because it is subjected to rules which are fixed and easy; nor do we know any language that is more regular and methodical.

The Mexicans, like the Greeks and other nations, have the advantage of making compounds of two, three, or four simple words; but



## BOOK VII.

they do it with more œconomy than the Greeks did; for the Greeks made use of the entire words in composition, whereas the Mexicans cut off syllables, or at least some letters from them. *Tlazotli*, signifies *valued* or *loved*; *Mabuitztic*, *honoured* or *revered*; *Tespixqui*, *priest*; a word itself too composed of *Teotl*, *god*; and the verb *Pia*, which signifies *to hold*, *guard*, or *keep*; *Tatli* is *father*, as we have already said. To unite those five words in one, they take away eight consonants and four vowels, and say for instance *Notlazomabuitzteopixcatalzin*, that is, *my very worthy father*, or *revered priest*; prefixing the *no*, which corresponds to the pronoun *my*, and adding *tzin*, which is a particle expressive of *reverence*. A word of this kind is extremely common with the Indians when they address, and particularly when they confess themselves, which although it is complex, is not, however one of the longest; for there are some compounded of so many terms as to have fifteen or sixteen syllables.

Such compounds were made use of in order to give the definition, or description, of a thing, whatever it was, in one word. This may be discovered in the names of animals and plants, which are to be found in the Natural History of Hernandez, and in the names of places which occur frequently in this history. Almost all the names which they gave to places of the Mexican empire are compounds, and signify the situation or properties of the places, and that some memorable action happened there. Many of their expressions are so strong, that the ideas of them cannot be heightened, particularly on the subject of love. In short, all those who have learned this language, and can judge of its copiousness, regularity, and beautiful modes of speech, are of opinion, that such a language cannot have been spoken by a barbarous people.

SECT. XLII.  
Eloquence  
and Poetry.

A nation possessed of so powerful a language, could not want poets and orators. Those two arts were much exercised by the Mexicans, although they were very far from knowing all their excellencies. Those who were destined to be orators, were instructed from their infancy in speaking properly, and learned to repeat by memory the most celebrated orations of their ancestors that had been handed down from father to son. Their eloquence was employed principally in delivering embassies, in councils, and congratulatory addresses, which they made to new kings.

kings. Although their most celebrated speakers are not to be compared with the orators of the polished nations of Europe, it is not to be denied that their discourses were sound, judicious, and elegant, as may be perceived from those specimens of their eloquence which are still extant. Even at present, when they are reduced to a state of great humiliation, and retain not their ancient institutions, they make harangues in their assemblies, which are so full of good sense and propriety, as to excite the admiration of all those who hear them.

The number of their public speakers was exceeded by that of their poets. In their verses they were attentive to the cadence and measure. Among the remains which we have of their poetry, are some verses in which between words that are significative, interjections, or syllables, are interposed, devoid of any meaning, and only made use of by what appears to adjust the measure; but this practice was, probably, only a vice of their bad poets. The language of their poetry was brilliant, pure, and agreeable, figurative, and embellished with frequent comparisons to the most pleasing objects in nature, such as flowers, trees, rivers, &c. It was in poetry chiefly where they made use of words in composition, which became often so very long, that a single one made a verse of the longest measure.

The subject of their poetical compositions was various. They composed hymns in praise of their gods, to obtain from them those favours they stood in need of, which were sung in the temples and at their sacred dances. Some were historical poems, reciting the events of the nation and the glorious action of their heroes, which were sung at profane dances. Some were odes, containing some moral or lesson useful in the conduct of life. Lastly, some were poems on love, or some other pleasing subject, such as the chase, which were sung at the public rejoicings of the seventh month. The priests were the chief composers of those pieces, and taught them to young boys, that they might sing them when they were grown up. We have already mentioned the celebrated compositions of king Nezahualcojotl. The esteem in which poetry was held by that king, excited his subjects to cultivate that art, and multiplied the number of poets of his court. It is related of one of those poets, that having been condemned to die for some crime, he made a composition in prison, in which he



BOOK VII. took leave of the world in so tender and pathetic a manner, that the musicians of the palace, who were his friends, advised him to sing it to the king; the king heard it, and was so much affected, that he granted the culprit a pardon. This was a singular event in the history of Acolhuacan, in which we read in general, examples of the greatest severity of government. We should be happy, if it were in our power, to produce here some fragments which we have seen of the poetry of those nations, to satisfy the curious among our readers (*e*).

SECT.  
XLIII.  
Mexican  
theatre.

Dramatic, as well as lyric poetry, was greatly in repute among the Mexicans. Their theatre, on which those kind of compositions were represented, was a square terras uncovered, raised in the market-place, or the lower area of some temple, and suitably high, that the actors might be seen and heard by all. That which was constructed in the market-place of Tlatelolco, was made of stone and lime, and, agreeable to what Cortes affirms, thirteen feet high, and thirty paces in length every way.

Cav. Boturini says, that the Mexican comedies were excellent, and that among the antiques which he had in his curious museum, were two dramatic compositions on the celebrated apparitions of the mother of God to the Mexican Neophyte Gio. Didaco, in which a particular delicacy and harmony in the expressions was discernible. We have never seen any composition of this nature, and although we do not doubt of the delicacies of the language of them, we cannot readily believe that their comedies were much according to the rules of the drama, or deserving of the excessive praise of that annalist. The description which Acoſta has left us of their theatre and representations, in which he mentions those which were made at Cholula at the great festival of the god *Quetzalcoatl*, is much more worthy of credit, and more consistent with the character of those nations: "There was," he says, "in the  
" area of the temple of this god a small theatre, thirty feet square,  
" curiously whitened, which they adorned with boughs, and fitted up  
" with the utmost neatness, surrounding it with arches made of flowers  
" and feathers, from which were suspended many birds, rabbits, and

(*e*) P. Orazio Carocci, a learned Milanese jesuit, published some elegant verses of the ancient Mexicans, in his admirable grammar of the Mexican language, printed in Mexico about the middle of the last century.

“ other pleasing objects ; where, after having dined, the whole of the people assembled, the actors appeared, and exhibited burlesque characters, feigning themselves deaf, sick with colds, lame, blind, crippled, and addressing the idol for a return of health : the deaf people answering at cross purposes, those who had colds, coughing, and spitting, and the lame halting ; all recited their complaints and misfortunes, which produced infinite mirth among the audience. Others appeared under the names of different little animals, some in the disguise of beetles, some like toads, some like lizards, and upon encountering each other, reciprocally explained their employments, which was highly satisfactory to the people, as they performed their parts with infinite ingenuity. Several little boys also belonging to the temple, appeared in the disguise of butterflies, and birds of various colours, and mounting upon the trees which were fixed there on purpose ; the priests threw little balls of earth at them with slings, occasioning incidents of much humour and entertainment to the spectators. All the spectators then made a grand dance which terminated the festival. This took place at their principal festivals only (*f*).”

The description which Acosta here gives, calls to our recollection the first scenes among the Greeks, and we doubt not, that if the Mexican empire had endured a century or two longer, their theatre would have been reduced to a better form, as the Grecian theatre improved itself but slowly and by degrees.

The first religious missionaries who announced the gospel to those nations, observing their attachment to music and poetry, and the superstitious notions which characterised all their native compositions as pagans, composed many songs and odes in the Mexican language in praise of the true God. The laborious Franciscan, Bernardino Sahagun, composed in pure and elegant Mexican, and printed at Mexico, three hundred and sixty-five hymns, one for each day of the year (*g*), and the Indians themselves composed many others in praise of the true God.

(*f*) Acosta Stor. Nat. a Mor. delle Indie, lib. v. cap. 29.

(*g*) Sahagun's work was printed, according to the best of our knowledge, in 1540. Dr. Eguiana complains in his *Biblioteca Messicana*, that he was never able to find one copy of it. We saw one in a library of the college of St. Francisco Saverio of the Jesuits of Angelopoli.



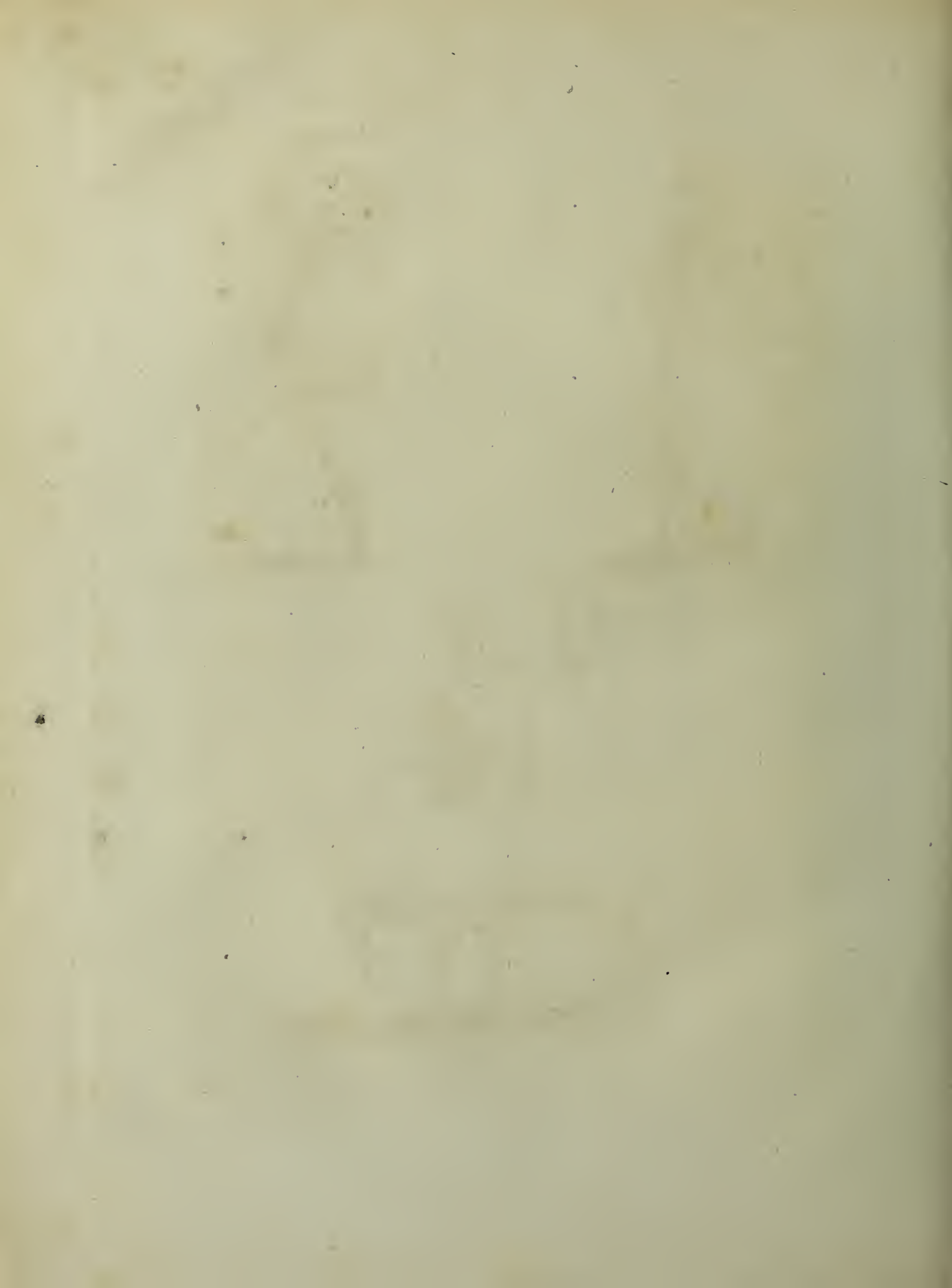
BOOK VII. Boturini makes mention of the compositions of D. Francisco Placido, governor of Azcapozalco, sung by him at the sacred dances, which he, along with other Mexican nobles, made before the famous image of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Those zealous Franciscans wrote also several dramatic pieces in Mexican, relative to the mysteries of the Christian religion. Amongst others was celebrated that of the universal judgment, composed by the indefatigable missionary Andrea d' Olmos, which was represented in the church of Tlatelolco, in the presence of the first governor, and the first archbishop of Mexico, and a great assembly of the Mexican nobility and people.

SECT.  
XLIV.  
Music.

Their music was still more imperfect than their poetry. They had no stringed instruments. All their music consisted in the *Huebuetl*, the *Teponaxtli*, horns, sea-shells, and little flutes or pipes, which made a shrill sound. The *Huebuetl*, or Mexican drum, was a cylinder of wood, more than three feet high, curiously carved and painted on the outside, covered above with the skin of a deer, well dressed and stretched, which they tightened or slackened occasionally, to make the sound more sharp or deep. They struck it only with their fingers, but it required infinite dexterity in the striker. The *Teponaxtli*, which is used to this day among the Indians, is also cylindrical and hollow, but all of wood, having no skin about it, nor any opening but two slits lengthways in the middle, parallel to, and at a little distance from each other. It is sounded by beating the space between those two slits with two little sticks, similar to those which are made use of for modern drums, only that their points are covered with ule, or elastic gum, to soften the sound. The size of this instrument is various; some are so small as to be hung about the neck; some of a middling size, and others so large as to be upwards of five feet long. The sound which they yield is melancholy, and that of the largest is so loud, that it may be heard at the distance of two or three miles. To the accompaniment of those instruments, the figure of which we here present to our readers, the Mexicans sung their hymns and sacred music. Their singing was harsh and offensive to European ears; but they took so much pleasure in it themselves, that on festivals, they continued singing the whole







whole day. This was unquestionably the art in which the Mexicans were least successful. BOOK VII.

However imperfect they were in music, their dances in which they exercised themselves from childhood, under the direction of the priests, were most graceful. They were of various kinds, and were differently named, according to the nature of the dance, or the circumstances of the festival on which they were made. They danced sometimes in a circle, and sometimes in ranks. At some dances only men, and at others, only women danced. On such occasions, the nobles put on their most pompous dresses, adorned themselves with bracelets, earrings, and various pendants of gold, jewels, and fine feathers, and carried in one hand a shield covered with the most beautiful plumes, or a fan made of feathers; and in the other an *Ajacaxtli*, which is a certain little vessel, which we shall mention hereafter, resembling a helmet, round or oval in shape, having many little holes, and containing a number of little stones which they shook together, accompanying the sound, which is not disagreeable, with their musical instruments. The populace disguised themselves, under various figures of animals, in dresses made of paper, of feathers, or skins. SECT. XLV.  
Dances.

The little dance, which was made in the palaces for the amusement of the lords, or in the temples, as a particular act of devotion, or in private houses, when they celebrated nuptials, or made any other domestic rejoicing, consisted of but a few dancers, who formed themselves in two parallel lines, dancing sometimes with their faces turned to the one, sometimes towards the other extremity of their lines; sometimes the person of one line faced those correspondent to them in the other, each line occasionally crossing and intermingling with the other, and sometimes one of each line detaching themselves from the rest, danced in the space between both, while the others stood still.

The great dance, which was made in large open spaces of ground, or in the area of the greater temple, differed from the other in the order, form, and number of the dancers. This dance was so numerous that some hundreds of people used to join in it. The music was placed in the middle of the area or space; near to it the lords danced, forming two, three, or more circles, according to the number of them which was present. At a little distance from them were formed other circles of dancers.



BOOK VII. dancers of less rank ; and, at a small interval from them, other circles proportionably larger were formed, which were composed of youths. All these circles had for their centre the *Huebuetl* and the *Teponastli*. The design which we have given of the order and disposition of this dance, represents it in the form of a wheel, in which the points denote the dancers, and the circles shew the figure which they described in their dance. The radii of the wheel are as many in number as there were dancers in the smallest circle nearest to the music. All the dancers described a circle in their dancing, and no person departed from the radius or line to which he belonged. Those who danced close to the music, moved with slowness and gravity, as the circle which they had to make was smaller, and on that account it was the place of the lords and nobles most advanced in age ; but those who occupied the station most distant from the music, moved with the utmost velocity, that they might neither lose the direction of the line to which they belonged, nor the measure in which the lords danced.

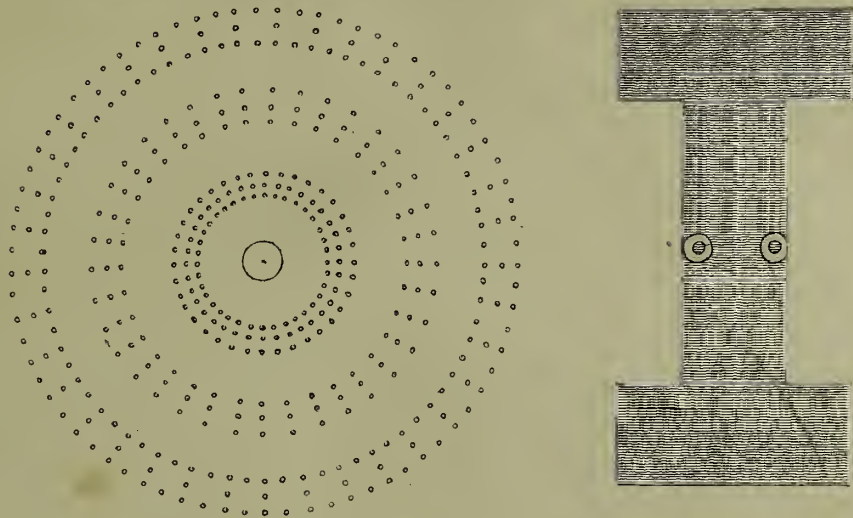
Their dances were almost always accompanied with singing ; but the singing was like all the movements of the dancers, adjusted by the beating of the instruments. Two persons sung a verse, to which all the rest answered. In general the music began with a grave tone, and the singers in a low voice. The longer the dance continued, the more cheerful tone was sounded by the music, the singers raised their voices, their movements became swifter, and the subject of their song more joyful. In the space between the different lines of dancers, some buffoons danced, who counterfeited the dress of other nations, or disguised themselves like wild beasts and other animals, exciting the mirth of the people with their buffooneries. When one set of dancers was wearied, another was introduced, and thus they continued the dance for six, and sometimes eight hours.

This was the form of their ordinary dance ; but they had others that were very different, in which they represented either some mystery of their religion, some event of history or war, the chase, or agriculture.

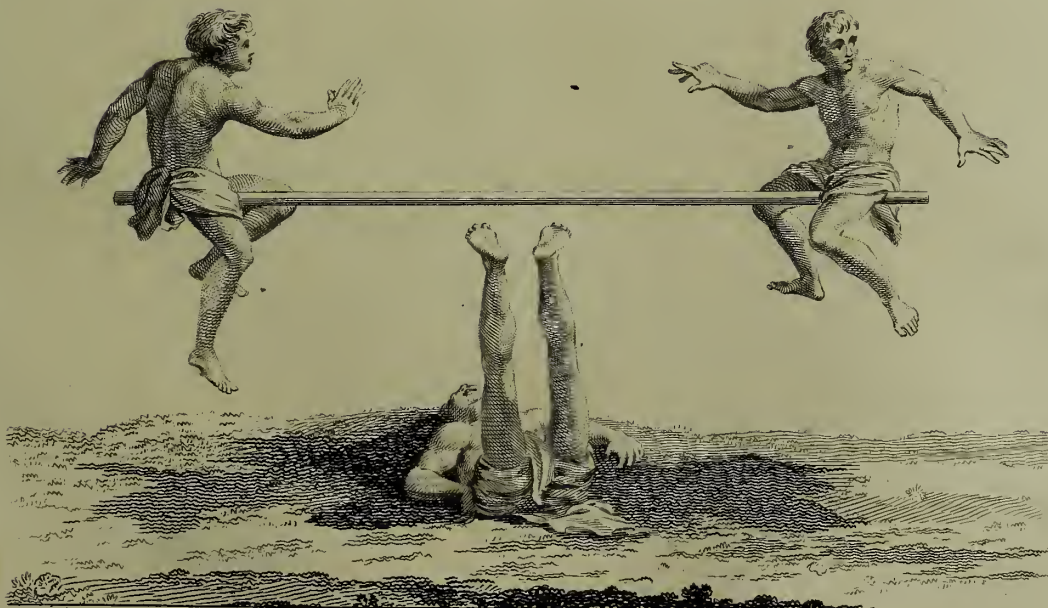
Not only the lords, the priests, and the youth of the colleges danced but likewise the kings in the temple in performance of their devotion, or for their amusement in the palaces, but on such occasions they had always a distinct place for themselves in respect to their character.

Among

*Plan of the  
Figure of the great Dance. Ground for the Game of Football.*



*Mexican feats of Activity.*







Among others there was one extremely curious dance which is still kept up by the people of Yucatan. They fixed in the earth a tree, or strong post, fifteen or twenty feet high, from the top of which, according to the number of dancers, they suspended twenty or more small cords, all long and of different colours. When each dancer had taken hold of the end of his cord, they all began to dance to the sound of musical instruments, crossing each other with great dexterity until they formed a beautiful net-work of the cords round the tree, on which the colours appeared chequered in admirable order. Whenever the cords, on account of the twisting, became so short, that the dancers could hardly keep hold of them with their arms raised up, by crossing each other again, they undid and unwound them from the tree. There is likewise practised by all the Indians of Mexico an ancient dance commonly called *Tocotin*, which is so graceful, decent, and solemn, that it has become one of the sacred dances performed on certain festivals in our time.

The amusements of the Mexicans were not confined to the theatre and dancing. They had various games, not only for certain fixed seasons and public occasions, but also for the diversion and relaxation of private individuals. Amongst the public games, the race was one in which they exercised themselves from childhood. In the second month, and possibly also at other times, there were military games, among which the warriors represented to the people a pitched battle. All those sports were most useful to the state, for besides the innocent pastime which they afforded to the people, they gave agility to their limbs, and accustomed them to the fatigues of war.

The exhibition of the flyers which was made on certain great festivals, and particularly in secular years, was, though of less public benefit, more celebrated than all others. They sought in the woods for an extremely lofty tree, which, after stripping it of its branches and bark, they brought to the city, and fixed in the centre of some large square. They cased the point of the tree in a wooden cylinder, which, on account of some resemblance in its shape, the Spaniards called a mortar. From this cylinder hung four strong ropes, which served to support a square frame. In the space between the cylinder and the frame, they fixed four other thick ropes, which they twisted as many times round

SECT.  
XLVI.  
Games.



## BOOK VII.

the tree as there were revolutions to be made by the fliers. These ropes were drawn through four holes, made in the middle of the four planks of which the frame consisted. The four principal flyers disguised like eagles, herons, and other birds, mounted the tree with great agility, by means of a rope which was laced about it from the ground up to the frame; from the frame they mounted one at a time successively upon the cylinder, and after having danced there a little, they tied themselves round with the ends of the ropes, which were drawn through the holes of the frame, and launching with a spring from it, began their flight with their wings expanded. The action of their bodies put the frame and the cylinder in motion; the frame by its revolutions gradually untwisted the cords by which the flyers swung; so that as the ropes lengthened, they made so much the greater circles in their flight. Whilst these four were flying, a fifth danced upon the cylinder, beating a little drum, or waving a flag, without the smallest apprehension of the danger he was in of being precipitated from such a height. The others who were upon the frame (there having been ten or twelve persons generally who mounted) as soon as they saw the flyers in their last revolution, precipitated themselves by the same ropes, in order to reach the ground at the same time amidst the acclamations of the populace. Those who precipitated themselves in this manner by the ropes, that they might make a still greater display of their agility, frequently passed from one rope to another, at that part where, on account of the little distance between them, it was possible for them to do so.

The most essential point of this performance consisted in proportioning so justly the height of the tree with the length of the ropes, that the flyers should reach the ground with thirteen revolutions, to represent by such number their century of fifty-two years, composed in the manner we have already mentioned. This celebrated diversion is still in use in that kingdom; but no particular attention is paid to the number of the revolutions, or the flyers; as the frame is commonly sexagonal, or octagonal, and the flyers six or eight in number. In some places they put a rail round the frame, to prevent accidents which were frequent after the conquest; as the Indians became much given to drinking, and used to mount the tree when intoxicated with wine or brandy, and were unable to keep their station on so great a height, which was usually sixty feet.







Amongst the private games of the Mexicans, the most common and most esteemed was one resembling football. The place where they played at it, which they called *Tlachco*, was, according to the description given us by Torquemada, a plain square space of ground, about eighteen perches in length, and proportionably broad, enclosed within four walls, which were thicker below than above, and the side walls were built higher than the others, and well whitened and polished. They were crowned all round with battlements, and on the lower wall stood two idols, which they placed there at midnight with different superstitious ceremonies, and before they ever played in it the place was blessed by the priests, with other forms of the same nature.

Thus Torquemada describes it; but in four or more paintings which we have seen, the draught of this game represents it such as we have given it in our figures, which is totally different from the description of Torquemada. It is probable, that there were varieties of the same game. The idols placed upon the walls were those of the gods of game, of whose names we are ignorant; but suspect the name of one of them to have been *Omacatl, the God of Rejoicings*. The ball was made of ule, or elastic gum, three or four inches in diameter, which, although heavier, rebounds more than those made of air. They played in parties, two against two, or three against three. The players were entirely naked except the *maxtlatl*, or large bandage, about their middle. It was an essential condition of the game not to touch the ball, unless it was with the joint of the thigh, or the arm, or elbow, and whoever touched it with his hand or foot, or any other part of the body, lost one of the game. The player who made the ball reach the opposite wall, or made it rebound from it, gained a point. Poor people played for ears of maize, or if they had nothing else they played for the price of their liberty; others staked a certain number of dresses of cotton; and rich persons played for articles of gold, precious feathers, and jewels. There were in the space between the players two large stones, resembling in figure our mill-stones, each of which had a hole in the middle, a little larger than the ball. Whoever struck the ball through this hole, which was extremely uncommon, was not only victor in the game, but according to the established law, became the



BOOK VII. proprietor of the dresses of all those who were present, and such a feat was celebrated as an immortal deed.

This game was in high estimation with the Mexicans, and the other nations of that kingdom, and much practised, as is to be concluded from the surprising number of balls which the cities of Tochtepec, Otatitlan, and other places, paid in tribute to the crown of Mexico, the number of which, as we have already mentioned, was not less than sixteen thousand. The kings themselves played and challenged each other at this game; as Montezuma II. did *Nezahualpilli*. At present it is not in use among the nations of the Mexican empire; but it is still kept up among the Najarites, the Opates, the Teraumarefe, and other nations of the North. All the Spaniards who have seen this game were surprised with the uncommon agility of the players.

The Mexicans took great delight also in another game, which some writers have called *patolli* (*b*). They described upon a fine mat made of the palm-tree, a square, within which they drew two diagonal and two cross lines. Instead of dice they threw large beans, marked with small points. According to the points which their dice turned up, they put down, or took up, certain little stones from the junction of the lines, and whoever had three little stones first in a series, was victor.

Bernal Diaz makes mention of another game at which king Montezuma used to amuse himself with the conqueror Cortes, during the time of his imprisonment, which he informs us was called *Totoloque*. That king, he says, threw from a distance certain little balls of gold, at certain pieces of the same metal, which were placed as marks, and whoever made the first five hits won the jewels for which they played.

Among the Mexicans there were persons extremely dexterous at games with the hands and feet. One man laid himself upon his back on the ground, and raising up his feet, took a beam upon them, or a piece of wood, which was thick, round, and about eight feet in length. He tossed it up to a certain height, and as it fell he received and tossed it up again with his feet; taking it afterwards between his feet, he turned it rapidly round, and what is more, he did so with two

(*b*) Patolli is a generic term signifying every sort of game.

*Other seats of Activity.*







men sitting astride upon it, one upon each extremity of the beam. This feat was performed at Rome before pope Clement VII. and many Roman princes, by two Mexicans sent over there by Cortes from Mexico, to the singular satisfaction of the spectators. The exercises also which, in some countries are called the powers of Hercules, were extremely common amongst them. One man began to dance; another, placed upright on his shoulders, accompanied him in his movements; while a third, standing upright upon the head of the second, danced and displayed other instances of agility. They placed also a beam upon the shoulders of two dancers, while a third danced upon the end of it. The first Spaniards, who were witnesses of those and other exhibitions of the Mexicans, were so much astonished at their agility, that they suspected some supernatural power assisted them, forgetting to make a due allowance for the progress of the human genius when assisted by application and labour.

Though games, dances, and music, conduced less to utility than pleasure; this was not the case with History and Painting; two arts, which ought not to be separated in the history of Mexico, as they had no other historians than their painters, nor any other writings than their paintings to commemorate the events of the nation.

SECT.  
XLVII.  
Different  
kinds of Mex-  
ican paint-  
ings.

The Toltecas were the first people of the new world who employed the art of painting for the ends of history; at least we know of no other nation which did so before them. The same practice prevailed, from time immemorial, among the Acolhuas, the seven Aztecan tribes, and among all the polished nations of Anahuac. The Chechemecas and the Otomies were taught it by the Acolhuas and the Toltecas, when they deserted their savage life.

Among the paintings of the Mexicans, and all those nations, there were many which were mere portraits or images of their gods, their kings, their heroes, their animals, and their plants. With these the royal palaces of Mexico and Tezcucó both abounded. Others were historical, containing an account of particular events, such as are the first thirteen paintings of the collection of Mendoza, and that of the journey of the Aztecas, which appears in the work of the traveller Gemelli. Others were mythological, containing the mysteries of their religion. Of this kind is the volume which is preserved in the great library.



## BOOK VII.

library of the order of Bologna. Others were codes, in which were compiled their laws, their rites, their customs, their taxes, or tributes; and such are all those of the above mentioned collection of Mendoza, from the fourteenth to the sixty-third. Others were chronological, astronomical, or astrological, in which was represented their calendar, the position of the stars, the changes of the moon, eclipses, and prognostications of the variations of the weather. This kind of painting was called by them *Tonalamatl*. Siguenza makes mention (*i*) of a painting representing such like prognostications which he inserted in his *Ciclographia Mexicana*. Acosta relates "that in the province of Yucatan, there were certain volumes, bound up according to their manner, in which the wise Indians had marked the distribution of their seasons, the knowledge of the planets, of animals, and other natural productions, and also their antiquity; things all highly curious and minutely described:" which, as the same author says, were lost by the indiscreet zeal of an ecclesiastic, who, imagining them to be full of superstitious meanings, burned them, to the great grief of the Indians, and the utmost regret of the curious amongst the Spaniards. Other paintings were topographical, or chorographical, which served not only to shew the extent and boundaries of possessions, but likewise the situation of places, the direction of the coasts, and the course of rivers. Cortes says, in his first letter to Charles V. that having made enquiries to know if there was any secure harbour for vessels in the Mexican gulf, Montezuma presented him a painting of the whole coast, from the port of *Chalchiubcuecan*, where at present Vera Cruz lies, to the river Coatzacualco. Bernal Diaz relates, that Cortes also, in a long and difficult voyage which he made to the Bay of Honduras, made use of a chart which was presented to him by the lords of Coatzacualco, in which all the places and rivers were marked from the coast of Coatzacualco to Huejacallan.

The Mexican empire abounded with all those kinds of paintings; for their painters were innumerable, and there was hardly any thing left unpainted. If those had been preserved, there would have been nothing wanting to the history of Mexico; but the first preachers of

(i) In his work entitled, *Libra Astronomica*, printed in Mexico.

the gospel, suspicious that superstition was mixed with all their paintings, made a furious destruction of them. Of all those which were to be found in Tezcuco, where the chief school of painting was, they collected such a mass, in the square of the market, it appeared like a little mountain; to this they set fire and buried in the ashes the memory of many most interesting and curious events. The loss of those monuments of antiquity was inexpressibly afflicting to the Indians, and regretted sufficiently afterwards by the authors of it, when they became sensible of their error; for they were compelled to endeavour to remedy the evil, in the first place by obtaining information from the mouths of the Indians; secondly, by collecting all the paintings which had escaped their fury, to illustrate the history of the nation; but although they recovered many, these were not sufficient; for from that time forward, the possessors of paintings became so jealous of their preservation and concealment from the Spaniards, it has proved difficult, if not impossible to make them part with one of them.

The cloth on which they painted was made of the thread of the maguei, or aloe, or the palm *Icxotl* (*k*), dressed skins, or paper. They made paper of the leaves of a certain species of aloe, steeped together like hemp, and afterwards washed, stretched, and smoothed. They made also of the palm *Icxotl*, and the thin barks of other trees, when united and prepared with a certain gum, both silk and cotton; but we are unable to explain any particulars of this manufacture. We have had in our hands several sheets of Mexican paper: it is similar in the thickness to the pasteboard of Europe, but softer, smoother, and easy for writing.

SECT.  
XLVIII.  
Cloths and  
colours.

In general they made their paper in very long sheets, which they preserved rolled up like the ancient membranes of Europe, or folded up like bed-screens. The volume of Mexican paintings, which is preserved in the library of Bologna, is a thick skin ill-dressed, composed of different pieces, painted all over, and folded up in that manner.

The beautiful colours which they employed both in their paintings and in their dyes, were obtained from wood, from leaves, and the

(*k*) The coarse cloth on which the famous image of the Virgin of Guadalupe is painted, is of the palm *Icxotl*.



## BOOK VII.

flowers of different plants, and various animals. White they obtained from the stone *Chimaltizatl*, which, on calcination, becomes like a fine plaister, or from the *Tizatalli*, another mineral, which after being made into a paste, worked like clay, and formed into small balls, takes in the fire a white colour resembling Spanish white. Black they got from another mineral, which, on account of its stinking smell, was called *Tlalibijac*, or from the foot of the *Ocotl*, which is a certain aromatic species of pine, collected in little earthen vessels. Blue and azure colours were obtained from the flower of the *Matlaxibuitl*, and the *Xiubquilipitzabuac*, which is indigo (*l*), although their mode of making them was very different from the way of the moderns. They put the branches of this plant into hot, or rather lukewarm water; and after having stirred them about for a sufficient time with a stick or ladle, they passed the water when impregnated with the dye into certain pots or cups, in which they let it remain until the solid part of the dye was deposited, and then they poured off the water. This lee or sediment was dried in the sun, and afterwards it was placed between two plates near a fire, until it grew hard. The Mexicans had another plant of the same name, from which they likewise obtained an azure colour, but of an inferior quality. Red they got from the seeds of the *Achiot* or *Ruocou*, boiled in water; and purple from the *Nochistli*, or cochineal. Yellow from the *Tecozahuatl*, or ochre; and likewise from the *Xochipalli*, a plant, the leaves of which resemble those of the *Artemisia*. The beautiful flowers of this plant, boiled in water with nitre, furnished them a fine orange-colour. In the same manner as they made use of nitre to obtain this colour, they employed alum to obtain others. After grinding and dissolving the aluminous earth in water, which they called *Tlalxocotl*, they boiled it in earthen vessels;

(*l*) The description of the indigo plant is found in many authors, particularly in Hernandez, lib. iv. cap. 12. which is totally different from that described by Raynal, in the sixth book of his Philosophical and Political History. This author affirms, that indigo was transplanted from the East-Indies to America, and that experiments having been made of it in several countries, the culture of it was established in Carolina, Hispaniola, and Mexico. This however is one of the many mistakes of that philosopher. It is certain, from the testimony of Ferdinand Columbus, in cap. lxi. of the Life of his famous parent Christopher Columbus, that one of the plants, native to the island of Hispaniola, was the indigo. We know also from the historians of Mexico, and particularly Hernandez, that the ancient Mexicans made use of indigo.

then by distillation, they extracted the allum pure, white, and transparent, and before they hardened it entirely, they parted it in pieces to sell it in the market. To make their colours hold better together, they made use of the glutinous juice of the Tzauhtli (*m*), or the fine oil of Chian (*n*).

The figures of mountains, rivers, buildings, trees, and minerals, and, above all, those of men, which appear in the paintings still extant of the ancient Mexicans, are for the most part unproportioned and deformed; this, however, we think is not to be ascribed so much to their ignorance of the proportions of objects, or their want of abilities, as to their haste in painting, of which the Spanish conquerors were witnesses: for as they solely paid attention to make a faithful representation of things, they neglected making their images perfect, and on that account frequently contented themselves with mere sketches or outlines. However, we have seen among the ancient paintings, many portraits of the kings of Mexico, in which besides the singular beauty of the colours, the proportions were most accurately observed; but we will, notwithstanding, confess, that the Mexican painters were by no means arrived at much perfection of design, or in mixing shade and light.

The Mexicans used in painting not only to represent the simple images of objects, as some writers have reported, but also employed hieroglyphics and characters (*o*). They represented material things by their proper figures, but in order to abridge and save labour, paper, and colours, they contented themselves with representing a part of an object which was sufficient to make it be understood by the intelligent; and as we cannot understand the writings of others, until we have learnt to read them, in like manner those American authors required to have been first instructed in the Mexican manner of representing objects, in order to have been able to understand the paintings which

SECT.  
XLIX.  
The character of their paintings, and mode of representing objects.

(*m*) The *Tzauhtli* is a plant very common in that country. Its leaves are similar to those of the leek, its stem is strait and knotty, its flowers tinged with a yellowish green, its root white and fibrous. To extract its juice they broke it and dried it in the sun.

(*n*) Thinking to render a service to the Italian painters, we cultivated with great attention three plants of the Chian sprung from seed sent from Mexico; they took root successfully, and we had the pleasure of seeing them loaded with flowers in September 1777; but the frost of that year coming more early than usual, nipped them entirely.

(*o*) Such authors are effectually refuted by Dr. Eguíara, in the learned preface to his *Bibliotheca Mexicana*, and by us in our Dissertations.



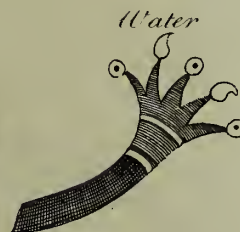
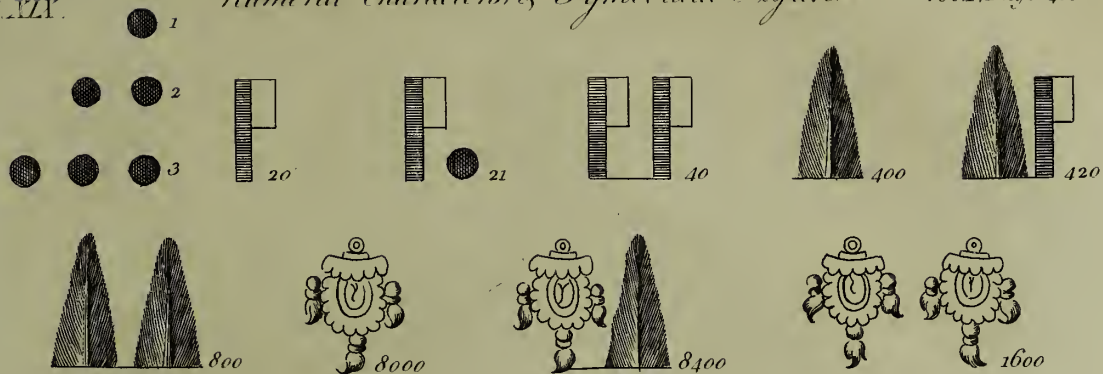
## BOOK VII.

served them in place of writings. For things which are even by nature totally devoid of figure, or were difficult of representation, they substituted certain characters; but these were not verbal, or destined to form words like our letters, but real characters immediately significative of the things, such as the characters of astronomers and algebraists. That our readers may form some idea of them, we have subjoined the Numeral characters of the Mexicans, also those of Time, the Heavens, the Earth, Water, and Air (*p*).

When they would represent any person, they painted a man, or a human head, and over it a figure expressing the meaning of his name, as appears in the figures of the Mexican kings. To express a city, or a village, they painted in the same manner a figure, which signified the same thing with its name. To form their histories or annals, they painted on the margin of the cloth or paper, the figures of the years in so many squares, and at the side of each square the event or events which occurred in that year; and if, on account of the number of years the history of which they meant to relate, they could not all be contained in one canvas, they were continued in another. With respect to the order of representing the years and events, it was at the liberty of the historian to begin at which ever angle of the piece he pleased; but at the same time constantly observing, that if the painting began at the upper angle on the right hand, he proceeded towards the left. If it began, which was most common, at the upper angle on the left hand, he proceeded straight downwards. If he painted the first year at the lower angle on the left, he continued towards the right; but if he began at the lower angle on the right, he proceeded straight upwards; so that on the upper part of his canvas he never painted from left to right, nor ever on the lower part from right to left; never advanced upwards from the left, nor downwards by the right. When this method of the Mexicans is understood, it is easy to discover at first

(*p*) Respecting the numeral characters, it is to be observed, they painted as many points as there were units unto twenty. This number has its proper character. Then they doubled it for 20 times, that is 400. This character was doubled in like manner, that is to 8000. Then they began to double the character of 8000. With those three characters, and the points, they expressed whatever number they chose, at least to twenty times 8000, or 160,000. But it is probable this number had its characters also.

fight,



The Deluge & confusion of Tongues.







fight, which is the beginning and which is the end of any historical painting. BOOK VII.

It cannot be denied that this method of expressing things was imperfect, perplexed, and equivocal; but praise is due to the attempt of those people to perpetuate the memory of events, and to their industry in supplying, though imperfectly, the want of letters, which it is probable they would have invented, in their progress to refinement, had their empire been of longer duration; at least they would have abridged and improved their paintings by the multiplication of characters.

Their paintings ought not to be considered as a regular full history, but only as monuments and aids of tradition. We cannot express too strongly the care which parents and masters took to instruct their children and pupils in the history of the nation. They made them learn speeches and discourses, which they could not express by the pencil; they put the events of their ancestors into verse, and taught them to sing them. This tradition dispelled the doubts, and undid the ambiguity which paintings alone might have occasioned, and by the assistance of those monuments perpetuated the memory of their heroes, and of virtuous examples, their mythology, their rites, their laws, and their customs.

Nor did that people make use only of tradition, of paintings, and songs, to preserve the memory of events, but also of threads of different colours, and differently knotted, called by the Peruvians *Quipu*, and by the Mexicans *Nepobualtzitzin*. This curious method of the representation of things, however much used in Peru, does not appear to have been employed in the province of Anahuac, if not in the most early ages; for no traces of such monuments are now to be found. Boturini says, that after the most diligent search, he, with difficulty, found one in a place of Tlascala, the threads of which were already wasted and consumed by time. If those who peopled South America ever passed the country of Anahuac, they possibly might have left there this art, which was afterwards abandoned for that of painting, introduced by the Toltecas, or some other nation still more ancient.

After the Spaniards communicated the use of letters to them, several able natives of Mexico, Tezcucó, and Tlascala, wrote their histories partly in Spanish, and partly in an elegant Mexican style, which



BOOK VII. histories are still preserved in some libraries of Mexico, as we have already mentioned.

SECT. L.  
Sculpture.

The Mexicans were more successful in sculpture, in the art of casting metals and mosaic works, than in painting. They expressed the images of their heroes, and of the works of nature in stone, wood, gold, silver, and feathers, better than on paper, either because the greater difficulty of those labours stimulated greater diligence and exertions, or because the high esteem in which they were held among that people, excited genius and encouraged industry.

Sculpture was one of the arts exercised by the ancient Toltecas. Until the time of the conquest several statues of stone were preserved which had been cut by the artists of that nation; in particular the idol of Tlaloc, placed upon the mountain of the same name, which was so much revered and worshipped by the Chechemecas and Acolhuas, and the gigantic statues erected in the celebrated temples of Teotihuacan. The Mexicans had sculptors among them when they left their native country Aztlan, for we know that they had at that time formed the idol of Huitzilopochtli, which they carried along with them in their long peregrination.

The usual materials of their statues were stone and wood. They wrought the stone without iron, steel, or any other instrument than a chissel made of flint stone. Their unparalleled phlegmatic nature and constancy in labour, were both necessary to overcome the difficulty, and endure the tediousness of such labours; and they succeeded in spite of the unsuitness of their instruments. They learned to express in their statues all the attitudes and postures of which the human body is capable; they observed the proportions exactly, and could, when necessary, execute the most delicate and minute strokes with the chissel. They not only made entire statues, but likewise cut out in stone, figures in basso relievo, of which kind are those of Montezuma II. and one of his sons, recorded with praises by Acosta. They also made statues of clay and wood, employing for these a chissel of copper. The surprising number of their statues may be imagined from that of their idols, which we mentioned in the preceding book. In this respect we have also to lament the furious zeal of the first bishop of Mexico, and the first preachers of the gospel; who, in order to remove from the sight  
of

of their converts all incentives to idolatry, have deprived us of many valuable monuments of the sculpture of the Mexicans. The foundation of the first church, which was built in Mexico, was laid with idols, and so many thousand statues were then broke in pieces and destroyed, that although the kingdom was most abounding in works of that kind, at present the most diligent search can hardly find any of them remaining. The conduct of those missionaries was no doubt laudable both in cause and effect, but they should have distinguished between the innocent statues of those people, and their superstitious images, that some of the former might have been kept entire in some place where no evil consequence would have attended their preservation.

The works which they executed by casting of metals were in more esteem with the Mexicans than the works of sculpture, both on account of the greater value of the materials, and the excellence of the art itself. The miracles they produced of this kind would not be credible, if besides the testimony of those who saw them, curiosities in numbers of this nature had not been sent from Mexico to Europe. The works of gold and silver sent in presents from the conqueror Cortes to Charles V. filled the goldsmiths of Europe with astonishment; who, as several authors of that period attest, declared (*g*) that they were altogether inimitable. The Mexican founders made both of gold and silver the most perfect images of natural bodies. They made a fish in this manner, which had its scales alternately one of silver and the other of gold; a parrot with a moveable head, tongue, and wings, and an ape with a moveable head and feet, having a spindle in its hand in the attitude of spinning. They set gems in gold and silver, and made most curious jewellery of great value. In short, these sort of works were so admirably finished, that even the Spanish soldiers, all stung with the same wretched thirst for gold, valued the workmanship above the materials. This wonderful art, formerly practised by the Toltecas, the invention of which they ascribed to the god Quetzalcoatl, has been entirely lost by the debasement of the Indians, and the indolent neg-

BOOK VII.

SECT. LI.  
Casting of  
metals.

(*g*) See in particular what is said of those works by the historian Gomara, who had them in his hands, and heard what the goldsmiths of Seville said upon seeing them.



## BOOK VII.

left of the Spaniards. We are doubtful if there are any remains of those curious works ; at least we apprehend, it would be more easy to find some in the cabinets of Europe than in all New Spain. Covetousness to profit by the materials must unquestionably have conquered all desire to preserve them as curiosities.

The Mexicans also wrought with the hammer, but in an inferior manner, and not at all to be compared with the goldsmiths of Europe ; for they had no other instruments to beat metals than stones. However, it is well known that they wrought copper well, and that the Spaniards were much pleased with their axes and pikes. The Mexican founders and goldsmiths formed a respectable body of people. They rendered particular worship to their protecting god *Xipe*, and in honour of him held a great festival in the second month, at which human victims were sacrificed.

SECT. LII.  
Mosaic  
works.

Nothing, however, was more highly valued by the Mexicans than their mosaic works, which were made of the most delicate and beautiful feathers of birds. They raised for this purpose various species of birds of fine plumage with which that country abounds, not only in the palaces of the king, where, as we have already observed, there were all sorts of animals, but likewise in private houses, and at certain seasons they carried off their feathers to make use of them on this kind of work, or to sell them at market. They set a high value on the feathers of those wonderful little birds which they call *Huitzitzilin*, and the Spaniards *Picaflores*, on account of the smallness, the fineness, and the various colours of them. In these and other beautiful birds, nature supplied them with all the colours which art can produce, and also some which art cannot imitate. At the undertaking of every mosaic work several artists assembled ; after having agreed upon a design, and taken their measures and proportions, each artist charged himself with the execution of a certain part of the image, and exerted himself so diligently in it with such patience and application, that he frequently spent a whole day in adjusting a feather ; first trying one, then another, viewing it sometimes one way, then another, until he found one which gave his part that ideal perfection proposed to be attained. When the part which each artist undertook was done, they assembled again to form the entire image from them. If any part was accidentally the


least deranged, it was wrought again until it was perfectly finished. They laid hold of the feathers with small pincers, that they might not do them the least injury, and pasted them on the cloth with *Tzauhtli*, or some other glutinous matter; then they united all the parts upon a little table, or a plate of copper, and flattened them softly until they left the surface of the image so equal and smooth it appeared to be the work of a pencil.

These were the images so much celebrated by the Spaniards and other European nations. Whoever beheld them was at a loss whether he ought to have praised most the life and beauty of the natural colours, or the dexterity of the artist, and the ingenious disposition of art. "These images," says Acosta, "are deservedly admired; for it is wonderful how it was possible, with the feathers of birds, to execute works so fine and so equal, that they appear the performance of the pencil; and what neither the pencil nor the colours in painting can effect, they have, when viewed from a side, an appearance so beautiful, so lively, and animated, they give delight to the sight. Some Indians, who are able artists, copy whatever is painted with a pencil so perfectly with plumage, that they rival the best painters of Spain." These works of feathers were even so highly esteemed by the Mexicans as to be valued more than gold. Cortes, Bernal Diaz, Gomara, Torquemada, and all the other historians who saw them, were at a loss for expressions sufficient to praise their perfection (*r*). A little time ago was living in Pazcuaro, formerly the capital of the kingdom of Michuacan, where this art chiefly flourished since the conquest, the last surviving artist of Mosaic works, and with him possibly is now, or will be, finished this admirable art, although for those two, last centuries past, it has fallen much short of its ancient perfection. Several works of this kind are still preserved in the museums of Europe, and many in Mexico, but few we apprehend belong to the fix-

(*r*) Stor. Nat. e Mor. lib. iv. c. 37.

(*s*) Gio. Lorenzo d'Anagnia, a learned Italian of the sixteenth century, treating of those images of the Mexicans, observes: "Amongst others I was greatly astonished at a San Girolamo with a crucifix and a lion, which La Sig. Diana Loffreda shewed me, discovering so much beauty from the liveliness of the natural colours, so well and so justly placed, that I imagined I could never see an equal to it, far less a better, among the ancient or even the most eminent modern painters."



**BOOK VII.** teenth century, and none of those which we know of, were made before the conquest. The mosaic works also which they made of broken shells was extremely curious; this art is still practised in Guatemala.

In imitation of those skilful artists there were others, who formed with flowers and leaves upon mats many beautiful works made use of at festivals. After the introduction of Christianity they made these works for ornament, they were sought after most eagerly by the Spanish nobility, on account of the singular beauty of the artifice. At present there are many artists in that kingdom, who employ themselves in counterfeiting with silk the images of feathers; but their performances are by no means comparable with those of the ancients.

**SECT. LIII.**  
Domestic or  
civil archi-  
tecture of the  
Mexicans.

A nation so industrious in those arts which could only serve for curiosity and luxury, could not be wanting in those which were necessary to life. Architecture, one of those arts which the necessity of man first invents, was exercised by the inhabitants of the country of Anahuac, at least from the time of the Toltecas. Their successors the Chechemecas, the Acolhuas, and all the other nations of the kingdoms of Acolhuacan, of Mexico, and Michuacan, of the republic of Tlascala, and other provinces, except the Otomies, built houses and formed cities from time immemorial. When the Mexicans arrived in that country, they found it full of large and beautiful cities. They who before they left their native country were skilled in architecture, and used to a social life, constructed in their pilgrimage many edifices in those places where they stopped for some years; some remains of which are still existing as we have already mentioned upon the banks of the river Gila, in Pimeria, and near to the city of Zacatecas. Reduced afterwards to greater hardships upon the little islands of the Tezcucan lake, they built humble huts with reeds and mud, until by the commerce of their fish they were able to purchase better materials. In proportion as their power and riches increased, they enlarged and improved their habitations; so that when the conquerors arrived, they found no less to be admired with their eyes than to be destroyed with their hands.

The houses of the poor were built of reeds, or unburned bricks, or stone and mud, and the roofs made of a long kind of hay which  
grows

grows thick, and is common in the fields, particularly in hot countries, or of the leaves of the maguei, or aloe, placed in the manner of tiles, to which they bear some resemblance both in thickness and shape. One of the columns or supports of these houses was generally a tree of a regular growth, by means of which, besides the pleasure they took in its foliage and shade, they saved themselves some labour and expence. These houses had for the most part but one chamber, where the family and all the animals belonging to it, the fire-place, and furniture, were lodged. If the family was not very poor, there were more chambers, an *ajaubcalli*, or oratory; a *temazcalli*, or bath, and a little granary.

The houses of lords, and people of circumstances, were built of stone and lime; they consisted of two floors, having halls, large courtyards, and the chambers fitly disposed; the roofs were flat and terraced; the walls were so well whitened, polished, and shining, that they appeared to the Spaniards when at a distance to have been silver. The pavement or floor was plaister, perfectly level, plain, and smooth.

Many of these houses were crowned with battlements and turrets; and their gardens had fish-ponds, and the walks of them symmetrically laid out. The large houses of the capital had in general two entrances, the principal one to the street, the other to the canal: they had no wooden doors to their houses, perhaps, because they thought their habitations sufficiently secure without them from the severity of the laws against robbers; but to prevent the inspection of passengers, they covered the entrance with little reeds, from which they suspended a string of cocoas, or pieces of broken kitchen utensils, or some other thing fit to awake by its noise the attention of the family, when any person lifted up the reeds to enter the house. No person was permitted to enter without the consent of the owner. When necessity, or civility, or family connections did not justify the entrance of any person who came to the house, he was listened to without and immediately dismissed.

The Mexicans understood the building of arches and vaults (*t*), as appears from their baths, from the remains of the royal palaces of Tez-

(*t*) Torquemada says, that when the Spaniards took away the roof from an arch built in the first church of Mexico, the Mexicans from terror durst not enter the church, expecting



## BOOK VII.

Tezcucó, and other buildings which escaped the fury of the conquerors, and also from several paintings. Cornices, and other ornaments of architecture, were likewise in use among them. They took great delight in making ornaments of stone, which had the appearances of snares about their doors and windows, and in some buildings there was a large serpent made of stone in the act of biting his tail, after having twisted his body through all the windows of the house. The walls of their buildings were upright and perpendicular; they must have made use of the plummet, or some other instrument of its nature, although owing to the negligence of historians, we are ignorant of the tools which they employed in building, as well as many other things belonging to this and other arts. Some are of opinion, that the Mexican masons in building walls, filled them up with earth on both sides, and that as the wall was raised, they raised likewise the heaps of earth so high, that, until the building was completed, the walls remained entirely buried and unseen; on which account the masons had no occasion for planks or scaffolding. But although this mode of building may appear to have been in practice among the Miztecas, and other nations of the Mexican empire, we do not believe that the Mexicans ever adopted it, from the great expedition with which they finished their buildings. Their columns were cylindrical, or square; but we cannot say whether they had either bases or capitals. They endeavoured at nothing more anxiously than to make them of one single piece, adorning them frequently with figures in basso relievo. The foundations of the large houses of the capital were laid upon a floor of large beams of cedar fixed in the earth, on account of the want of solidity in the soil, which example the Spaniards have imitated. The roofs of such houses were made of cedar, of fir, of cypress, of pine, or of ojametl; the columns were of common stone; but in the royal palaces they were of marble, and some even of alabaster, which many Spaniards mistook for jasper. Before the reign of Ahuitzotl, the walls of houses were built of common stone; but as they discovered in the

every moment to see the arch fall. But if they were seized with any such apprehension, it was certainly not occasioned by seeing the arch, which was in use among themselves, but possibly from seeing the scaffolding taken away quickly, or some other circumstance which excited their admiration.

time

time of that king the quarries of the stone Tetzontli, upon the banks of the Mexican lake, it was afterwards preferred as the most fit for the buildings of the capital, it being hard, light, and porous like a sponge: on which account lime adheres very firmly to it. For these properties and its colour, which is a blood red, it is at present valued above any other stone for buildings. The pavements of their courts and temples were in general of the stone of Tenajocan; but some also were chequered with marble and other precious stones.

Although the Mexicans are not to be compared with the Europeans in regard to taste in architecture, yet the Spaniards were so struck with admiration and surprize on seeing the royal palaces of Mexico, that Cortes, in his first letter to Charles V. unable to find words to describe them, speaks thus: "He had," he says, speaking of Montezuma, "besides those in the city of Mexico, other such admirable houses for his habitation, that I do not believe I shall ever be able to express their excellence and grandeur; therefore I shall only say that there are no equals to them in Spain." Such expressions are made use of by Cortes in other parts of his letters; by the anonymous conqueror in his valuable relation, and by Bernal Diaz in his most faithful history, who were all three present at the conquest.

The Mexicans also constructed, for the convenience of inhabited places, several excellent aqueducts. Those of the capital for conducting the water from Chapoltepec, which was two miles distant, were two in number, made of stone and cement five feet high, and two paces broad upon a road raised for that purpose upon the lake, by which the water was brought to the entrance of the city, and from thence it branched out through smaller channels to supply several fountains, and particularly those of the royal palaces. Although there were two aqueducts, the water was only brought by one at a time, as in the interval they cleared the other that they might always have the water pure. At Tezcutzinco, formerly a palace of pleasure of the kings of Tezcucuo, may still be seen an aqueduct by which water was conveyed to the royal gardens.

The above mentioned road of Chapoltepec, as well as others made upon the lake, and frequently taken notice of in this history, are incontestible proofs of the industry of the Mexicans; but it is still

H h h 2

more

SECT. LIV.  
Aqueducts  
and ways up-  
on the lake.



BOOK VII. more manifested in the foundation of their city ; for whereas other architects have no more to do than to lay a foundation upon solid earth, to raise an edifice, the Mexicans were obliged to make the soil on which they built, uniting by terraces several little islands together. Besides this prodigious fatigue, they had to raise banks and pallisadoes to render their habitations secure. But if in these works their industry is conspicuous, in many others the Mexicans shew their taste for magnificence. Amongst the monuments of ancient architecture which are extant in the Mexican empire, the edifices of Mictlan, in Mizteca, are very celebrated ; there are many things about them worthy of admiration, particularly a large hall, the roof of which is supported by various cylindrical columns of stone, eighty feet high, and about twenty in circumference, each of them consisting of one single piece.

SECT. LV.  
Remains of  
ancient edi-  
fices.

But this, or any other fabric of Mexican antiquity now remaining, cannot be compared with the famous aqueduct of Chempoallan. This large work, worthy of being ranked with the greatest in Europe, was done about the middle of the sixteenth century. The Franciscan missionary Francisco Tembleque, directed, and the Chempoallese executed it with wonderful perfection. Moved with compassion for the distress which his proselytes suffered from a scarcity of water, as all that could be gathered in trenches and ditches was consumed by the cattle of the Spaniards, that pious father undertook to relieve the necessities of his people at all events. The water was at a great distance, and the country through which it was necessary to conduct it, was mountainous and rocky ; but every difficulty was overcome by his zeal and activity, aided by the industry and toil of his converts. They constructed an aqueduct of stone and lime, which, on account of the frequent turnings they were obliged to make in the mountains, was upwards of thirty miles long. The greatest difficulty consisted in crossing three great precipices which intercepted their progress ; but this was got over by three bridges, the first consisting of forty-seven, the second of thirteen, and the third, which is the largest and most wonderful of all, having sixty-seven arches. The largest arch, which was in the middle, situated in the greatest depth of the precipice is one hundred and ten geometrical feet in height, and sixty-one in breadth, so that a large vessel could pass under it. The other sixty-six arches,  
situated

situated on each side of the largest, diminished gradually on each side unto the edge or top of the precipice, so as to leave the ground level with the course of the aqueduct. This large bridge is 3,178 geometrical feet, or upwards of half a mile in length. The work of it occupied the space of five years, and the whole aqueduct seventeen. We have deemed it not improper to insert the description of this superb fabrick; as although it was the undertaking of a Spaniard, after the conquest, it was executed by the Chempoallese, who survived the downfall of their empire.

The ignorant Mr. de P. denies that the Mexicans had either the knowledge, or made use of lime; but it is evident from the testimony of all the historians of Mexico, by tribute rolls, and above all from the ancient buildings still remaining, that all those nations made the same use of lime as the Europeans do. The vulgar of that kingdom believe, that the Mexicans mixed eggs with lime to render it more tenacious; but this is an error, occasioned by seeing the ancient walls of a yellowish cast. It is manifest also, from the testimony of the first historians, that burnt tiles or bricks were used by the Mexicans, and that they sold them like all other things in the market-place.

The stone-cutters, who cut and wrought stones for building, did not make use of pickaxes, nor iron chissels, but only of certain instruments of flint-stone; with these, however, they executed beautiful works and engravings. But those sort of labours without iron do not raise so much wonder as the stones of stupendous size and weight which were found in the capital and other places, transported from great distances, and placed in high situations without the aid of machines which mechanism has invented. Besides common stone they wrought marble, also jasper, alabaster, itztli, and other valuable stones. Of itztli, they made beautiful looking-glasses set with gold, and those extremely sharp razors which they fixed in their swords, and which their barbers made use of. They made those razors with such expedition, that in the space of one hour an artificer could finish more than a hundred (*u*).

SECT. LVI.  
Stone-cutters, engravers, jewellers, and potters.

The Mexican jewellers not only had skill in gems, but likewise understood how to polish work and cut them, and formed them into

(*u*) Hernandez Torquemada and Betancourt, describe the manner in which those artists made their razors of the stone itztli.



## BOOK VII.

whatever figures they chose. Historians affirm, that these works were done with a particular sand; but it is most certain, they could not do them without some instrument of flint, or hard copper, which is found in that country. The gems most common among the Mexicans were emeralds, amethysts, cornelians, turquoises, and some others not known in Europe. Emeralds were so common, that no lord or noble wanted them, and none of them died without having one fixed to his lip, that it might serve him as they imagined instead of a heart. An infinite number of them were sent to the court of Spain in the first years after the conquest. When Cortes returned the first time to Spain, he brought along with him, amongst other inestimable jewels, five emeralds, which, as Gomara, who was then living, bears testimony, were valued at a hundred thousand ducats, and for one of them some Genoese merchants offered him forty thousand, in order to sell it again to the grand signor (x); and also two emerald vases, valued, as the celebrated P. Mariana (y) says, at three hundred thousand ducats, which vases Cortes lost by the shipwreck which he suffered in the unfortunate expedition of Charles V. against Algiers. At present no more such gems are wrought, nor is even the place of the mines known where they were formerly dug: but there are still some enormous pieces of emerald remaining, namely, a sacred stone in the cathedral church of Angelopoli, and another in the parochial church of Quechula (unless this is the same transported from thence to Angelopoli), which the priests keep secured with chains of iron, as Betancourt says, that no one may carry it off.

The potters not only made the necessary family utensils of clay, but also other things of mere curiosity, which they embellished with

(x) With regard to Cortes's emeralds, the first was made in form of a rose, the second like a horn, the third like a fish, with eyes of gold; the fourth was a little bell, with a fine pearl for a clapper, and upon the lip this inscription in Spanish, *Bendito quien te criò*, that is, *Blessed be, who created thee*. The fifth, which was the most valuable, and for which the Genoese merchants would have given forty thousand ducats, was a small cup with a foot of gold, and four little chains also of gold, which united in a pearl in the form of a button. The lip of the cup was girt with a ring of gold, on which was engraved this Latin sentence, *Inter natos mulierum non surrexit major*. These five emeralds, wrought by the Mexicans at the order of Cortes, were presented by him to his second wife, the daughter of the count of Aguilar; jewels, says Gomara, who saw them, bet er than any other woman whatsoever had in all Spain.

(y) Mariana in the Summary, or Supplement of the History of Spain.

various colours; but they did not understand, by what we can discover, the art of making glafs. The most famous potters formerly were the Cholulense, whose vessels were much prized by the Spaniards; at present the most reputed are the potters of Quauhtitlan.

Their carpenters wrought several kinds of wood with instruments made of copper, of which there are still some remains of tolerable workmanship.

SECT. LVII.  
Carpenters,  
weavers, &c.

Manufactures of various kinds of cloth were common every where; it was one of those arts which almost every person learned. They had no wool, nor common silk, nor lint, nor hemp, but they supplied the want of wool with cotton, that of silk with feathers, with the hair of the rabbit and hare, and that of lint and hemp with *icxotl*, or mountain-palm, with the *quetzalichtli*, the *pati*, and other species of the maguei. Of cotton they made large webs, and as delicate and fine as those of Holland, which were with much reason highly esteemed in Europe. A few years after the conquest, a sacerdotal habit of the Mexicans was brought to Rome, which, as Boturini affirms, was uncommonly admired on account of its fineness and beauty. They wove these cloths with different figures and colours, representing different animals and flowers. Of feathers, interwoven with cotton, they made mantles and bed curtains, carpets, gowns, and other things not less soft than beautiful. We have seen some beautiful mantles of this kind which are preserved still by some lords; they wear them upon extraordinary festivals, as at those of the coronation of the Spanish kings. With cotton also they interwove the finest hair of the belly of rabbits and hares, after having dyed and spun it into thread; of these they made most beautiful cloths, and in particular winter waistcoats for the lords. From the leaves of the *Pati* and *Quetzalichtli* two species of the maguei, they obtained a fine thread, with which they made cloths equal to those made of lint; and from the leaves of other kinds of the maguei, namely, those of the mountain-palm, they drew a coarser thread, similar to hemp. The method they used to prepare those materials was the same which is practised by the Europeans for lint and hemp. They soaked the leaves in water, then cleaned them, put them in the sun, and beat them until they were fit to spin.

Of



## BOOK VII.

Of the same leaves of the mountain-palm, and also of those of the *izhuatl*, another species of palm, they made extremely fine mats of different colours. They made others more coarse of the rushes which grew in abundance in the lake.

Of the thread of the maguei they made also ropes, shoes, and other things.

They dressed the skins of animals tolerably well, both of quadrupeds and birds, leaving upon some of them the hair or plumage, according to the use which they proposed to make of them.

Lastly, to convey some idea of the taste of the Mexicans in arts, we have thought proper to transcribe here the list of the first things which Cortes sent from Mexico to Charles V. a few days after he arrived in that country (z).

SECT.  
LVIII.  
List of the  
rarities sent  
by Cortes to  
Charles V.

Two wheels, ten hands in diameter, one of gold with the image of the sun, and the other of silver with the image of the moon upon it; both formed of plates of those metals, with different figures of animals and other things in basso relievo, finished with great ingenuity and art (a).

A gold necklace, composed of seven pieces, with a hundred and eighty-three small emeralds set in it, and two hundred and thirty-two gems similar to small rubies, from which hung twenty-seven little bells of gold, and some pearls.

Another necklace of four pieces of gold, with one hundred and two red gems like small rubies, one hundred and seventy-two emeralds, and ten fine pearls set in it, with twenty-six little bells of gold.

A headpiece of wood covered with gold, and adorned with gems, from which hung twenty-five little bells of gold; instead of a plume it had a green bird with eyes, beak, and feet of gold.

A bracelet of gold. A little rod like a sceptre, with two rings of gold at its extremities, set with pearls.

Four tridents, adorned with feathers of various colours, with pearl points tied with gold thread.

(z) This list is taken from the history of Gomara, then living in Spain, some things only omitted which were of little importance to be mentioned.

(a) The wheel of gold was unquestionably the figure of their century, and that of silver the figure of their year, according to what Gomara says, but he did not know it with certainty.

Several

Several shoes of the skin of the deer, sewed with gold thread, the soles of which were made of blue and white stone of Itztli, extremely thin (*b*).

A shield of wood and leather, with little bells hanging to it, and covered with plates of gold in the middle, on which was cut the image of the god of war between four heads of a lion, a tyger, an eagle, and an owl, represented alive with their hair and feathers.

Several dressed skins of quadrupeds and birds with their plumage and hair.

Twenty-four curious and beautiful shields of gold, of feathers, and very small pearls, and other four of feathers and silver only.

Four fishes, two ducks, and some other birds of cast gold.

Two sea-shells of gold, and a large crocodile girt with threads of gold.

A large mirror adorned with gold, and many small mirrors. Several mitres and crowns of feathers and gold, ornamented with pearls and gems.

Several large plumes of beautiful feathers of various colours, fretted with gold and small pearls.

Several fans of gold and feathers mixed together; others of feathers only, of different forms and sizes, but all most rich and elegant.

A variety of cotton mantles, some all white, others chequered with white and black, or red, green, yellow, and blue; on the outside rough like a shaggy cloth, and within without colour or nap.

A number of under waistcoats, handkerchiefs, counterpanes, tapestries, and carpets of cotton.

All those articles were, according to Gomara, more valuable for the workmanship than the materials. *The colours, he says, of the cotton, were extremely fine, and those of the feathers natural. Their works of cast metal, are not to be comprehended by our goldsmiths.* This present, which was a part of that which Montezuma made to Cortes, a few days after he had disembarked at *Chalchiuhcuecan*, was sent by Cortes to Charles V. in July 1519, and this was the first gold and the first

(*b*) Gomara does not express that the soles were made of the stone Itztli, but it is to be understood from his account.



BOOK VII. silver which was sent from New to Old Spain ; a small preface of the immense treasures it was to send in future.

Amongst other arts exercised by the Mexicans, that of medicine has been entirely overlooked by the Spanish historians, although it is certainly not the least essential part of their history. They have contented themselves with saying, that the Mexican physicians had a great knowledge of herbs, and that by means of these they performed miraculous cures ; but do not mark the progress which they made in an art so beneficial to the human race. It is not to be doubted, that the same necessities which stimulated the Greeks to make a collection of experiments and observations on the nature of diseases, and the virtue of simples, would also have in time led the Mexicans to the knowledge of those two most important parts of medicine.

SECT.  
LIX.  
Knowledge  
of nature and  
use of medi-  
cinal simples.

We do not know whether they intended by their paintings, like the Greeks by their writings, to communicate their lights to posterity. Those who followed the profession of medicine instructed their sons in the nature and differences of the diseases to which the human frame is subject, and of the herbs which Providence has created for their remedy, the virtues of which had been experienced by their ancestors. They taught them the art of discerning the symptoms and progress of different distempers, and to prepare medicines and apply them. We have ample proofs of this in the natural history of Mexico, written by Dr. Hernandez (c). This learned and laborious writer had always the Mexican physicians for his guides in the study of natural history, which

(c) Hernandez who was physician to Philip II. king of Spain, and much renowned for the works he published concerning the Natural History of Pliny, was sent by that monarch to Mexico, to study the natural history of that kingdom. He employed himself there with other able learned naturalists for several years, assisted by the Mexican physicians. His work, worthy of the expence which it cost of sixty thousand ducats, consisted of twenty-four books of history, and eleven volumes of excellent figures of plants and animals ; but the king thinking it too voluminous, gave orders to his physician Nardo Antonio Ricchi, a Neapolitan, to abridge it. This abridgement was published in Spanish by Francisco Ximenes, a Dominican, in 1615, and afterwards in Latin, at Rome, in 1651, by the Lincean academicians, with notes and learned dissertations, though rather long and uninteresting. The manuscripts of Hernandez were preserved in the library of the Escorial, from which Nuremberg extracted, according to his own confession, a great part of what he has written in his Natural History. F. Claude Clement, a French Jesuit, discoursing of the manuscript of Hernandez, says thus : “ Qui omnes libri, & commentarii, si prout affecti sunt, ita forent perfecti, & absoluti, Philippus II. & Franciscus Hernandius haud quaquam Alexandro, & Aristoteli hac in parte concederent.”

he prosecuted in that empire. They communicated to him the knowledge of twelve hundred plants, with their proper Mexican names; more than two hundred species of birds; and a large number of quadrupeds, reptiles, fishes, insects, and minerals. From this most valuable, though imperfect history, a system of practical medicine may be formed for that kingdom; as has in part been done by Dr. Farfan, in his *Book of Cures*, by Gregorio Lopez, and other eminent physicians. And if since that time the study of natural history had not been neglected, nor such a prepossession prevailed in favour of every thing which came from beyond the seas, the inhabitants of New Spain would have saved a great part of the expences they have been at in purchasing the drugs of Europe and of Asia, and reaped greater advantages from the productions of their own country. Europe has been obliged to the physicians of Mexico for tobacco, American balsam, gum copal, liquid amber, sarsaparilla, tecamaca, jalap, barley, and the purgative pine-seeds, and other simples, which have been much used in medicine: but the number of those of which she has been deprived the benefit by the ignorance and negligence of the Spaniards, is infinite.

Among the purgatives employed by the physicians of Mexico, besides jalap, pine-feed, and the small bean, the Mechoacan, so well known in Europe (*d*), was extremely common, also the *Izticpatli*, much celebrated by Hernandez, and the *Amamaxtla*, vulgarly called the *Rhubarb of the Brothers*.

Amongst other emetics the Mexicans made use of the *Mexochitl*, and the *Neixcotlapatli*; and among diuretics the *Axixpatli*, and the *Axixtlacotl*, which is so highly praised by Hernandez. Amongst their antidotes the famous *Contrabierba* was deservedly valued, called by them on account of its figure, *Coanenepilli*, *Tongue of Serpent*, and on account of its effects *Coapatli*, or *remedy against serpents*. Amongst their errhines was the *Zozojatic*, a plant so efficacious, that it was

(*d*) The celebrated root of Mechoacan is called *Tacuache* by the Tarascas, and *Tlalantlacuitlapilli* by the Mexicans. The knowledge of it was communicated by a physician of the king of Michuacan to the first religious missionaries who went there to preach the gospel; he cured them with it of certain fevers of a putrid nature. By them it was made known to the Spaniards, and from the Spaniards to all Europe.



BOOK VII. sufficient to hold the root to the nose to produce sneezing. For intermittent fevers they generally employed the *Chatalbuic*, and in other kind of fevers the *Chiautzolli*, the *Iztacxalli*, the *Huebuctzonticomatl*, and above all the *Izticpatli*. To prevent the illness which frequently followed too much exercise at the game of the ball, they used to eat the bark of the *Apitzalpatli* soaked in water. We should never finish if we were to mention all the plants, gums, minerals, and other medicines, both simple and compound, which they employed against all the distempers which were known to them. Whoever desires to be more amply informed on this subject may consult the above mentioned work of Hernandez, and the two treatises published by Dr. Monardes, a Sevillian physician, on the medicinal articles, which used to be brought from America to Europe.

SECT. LX.  
Oils, ointments, and infusions, &c.

The Mexican physicians made use of infusions, decoctions, ointments, and oils, and all those things were sold at market, as Cortes and Bernal Diaz, both eye-witnesses, affirm. The most common oils were those of ule, or elastic gum, *Tlapatl*, a tree similar to the fig, *Chilli*, or great pepper, Chian, and *Ocotl*, a species of pine. The last they obtained by distillation, the others by decoction. That of Chian was more used by painters than physicians.

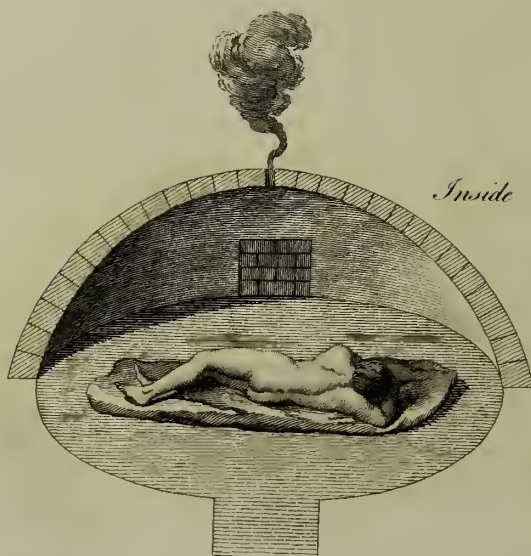
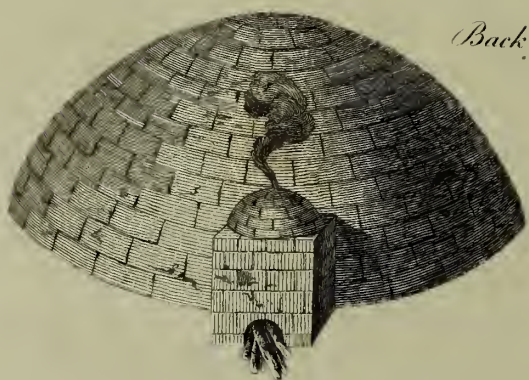
They extracted from the *Huitziloxitl*, as we have already mentioned, those two sorts of balsam described by Pliny and other ancient naturalists, that is, the *opobalsam*, or balsam distilled from the tree, and the *xylobalsam* obtained by decoction of the branches. From the bark of the *Huacoxex*, soaked four days continually in water, they extracted another liquor equal to balsam. From the plant called by the Spaniards *maripenda*, (a name taken it appears from the language of the Tarascas, they obtained also a liquor equal to balsam, as much in its odour as wonderful effects, by putting the tender stones of the plant, together with the fruit, to boil in water, until the water became as thick as must. In the same manner they obtained many other valuable oils and liquors, namely, that of liquid amber, and that of the fir.

SECT. LXI.  
Bloodletting and baths.

Blood-letting, an operation which their physicians performed with great dexterity and safety with lancets of *Itztli*, was extremely common among the Mexicans, and other nations of Anahuac. The country people used to let themselves blood as they still do with the prickles of the *magui*,







guei, without employing another person, or interrupting the labour in BOOK VII. which they were occupied. They also used the quills of the *Huitztlacuatzin*, or Mexican porcupine, which are thick, and have a small hole at their points.

Among the means which the Mexicans employed for the preservation of health, that of the bath was very frequent. They bathed themselves extremely often, even many times in the same day in the natural water of rivers, lakes, ditches, and ponds. Experience has taught the Spaniards the advantages of bathing, in that climate, and particularly in the hot countries.

The Mexicans, and other nations of Anahuac, made little less frequent use of the bath *Temazcalli*. Although in all its circumstances it is deserving of particular mention in the history of Mexico, none of the historians of that kingdom have described it, attending more frequently to descriptions and accounts of less importance, so much that if some of those baths had not been still preserved, the memory of them must have totally perished.

SECT. LXII.  
Temazcalli,  
or vapour-  
baths of the  
Mexicans.

The *Temazcalli*, or Mexican vapour-bath, is usually built of raw bricks. The form of it is similar to that of ovens for baking bread; but with this difference, that the pavement of the *Temazcalli* is a little convex, and lower than the surface of the earth, whereas that of most ovens is plain, and a little elevated for the accommodation of the baker. Its greatest diameter is about eight feet, and its greatest height six. The entrance, like the mouth of an oven, is wide enough to allow a man to creep easily in. In the place opposite to the entrance there is a furnace of stone or raw bricks, with its mouth outwards to receive the fire, and a hole above it to carry off the smoke. The part which unites the furnace to the bath, and which is about two feet and a half square, is shut with a dry stone of *Tetzontli*, or some other stone porous like it. In the upper part of the vault there is an air hole, like that to the furnace. This is the usual structure of the *Temazcalli*, of which we have subjoined a figure; but there are others that are without vault or furnace, mere little square chambers, yet well covered and defended from the air.

When any person goes to bathe, he first lays a mat (*e*) within the *Temazcalli*, a pitcher of water, and a bunch of herbs, or leaves of

(*e*) The Spaniards, when they bathed, made use of a mattrafs for more convenience. maize.



## BOOK VII.

maize. He then causes a fire to be made in the furnace, which is kept burning, until the stones which join the *Temazcalli* and furnace are quite hot. The person who is to use the bath enters commonly naked, and generally accompanied for the sake of convenience, or on account of infirmity, by one of his domestics. As soon as he enters, he shuts the entrance close, but leaves the air-hole at top for a little time open, to let out any smoke which may have been introduced through the chinks of the stone; when it is all out he likewise stops up the air-hole. He then throws water upon the hot stones, from which immediately arises a thick steam to the top of the *Temazcalli*. While the sick person lies upon the mat, the domestic drives the vapour downwards, and gently beats the sick person, particularly on the ailing part, with the bunch of herbs, which are dipped for a little while in the water of the pitcher, which has then become a little warm. The sick person falls immediately into a soft and copious sweat, which is increased or diminished at pleasure, according as the case requires. When the evacuation desired is obtained, the vapour is let off, the entrance is cleared, and the sick person clothes himself, or is transported on the mat to his chamber; as the entrance to the bath is usually within some chamber of his habitation.

The *Temazcalli* has been regularly used in several disorders, particularly in fevers occasioned by costiveness. The Indian women use it commonly after child-birth, and also those persons who have been stung or wounded by any poisonous animal. It is, undoubtedly, a powerful remedy for all those who have occasion to carry off gross humours, and certainly it would be most useful in Italy where the rheumatism is so frequent and afflicting. When a very copious sweat is desired, the sick person is raised up and held in the vapour; as he sweats the more, the nearer he is to it. The *Temazcalli* is so common, that in every place inhabited by the Indians there are many of them.

SECT.  
XLIII.  
Surgery.

With respect to the surgery of the Mexicans, the Spanish conquerors attest their expedition and success in dressing and curing wounds (*f*).

Besides the balsam and maripenda, they employed the milk of the

(*f*) Cortes himself being in great danger of his life from a wound he received on his head in the famous battle of Otompan, was greatly relieved, and at last perfectly cured by the Tlascalan art of surgery.

*Itzontecpatli* (*species of thistle*), tobacco, and other herbs. For ulcers they used the *Nanabuapatli*, the *Zacatlipatli*, and the *Itzcuinpatli*; for abscesses and several swellings, the *Tlalamatl*, and the milk of the *Chilpatli*; and for fractures the *Nacazol*, or *Tolatzin*. After drying, and reducing the seed of this plant to powder, they mixed it with a certain gum, and applied it to the affected part, covered the part with feathers, and over it laid little boards to set the bones.

The physicians were in general the persons who prepared and applied medicines; but they accompanied their cures with several superstitious ceremonies, with invocations to their gods, and imprecations against distempers, in order to render their art more mysterious and estimable. The physicians held the goddess *Tzapotlatenan* in veneration, as the protectress of their art, and believed her to have been the discoverer of many medicinal secrets, and amongst others of the oil which they extracted by distillation from the *Ocotl*.

It is wonderful that the Mexicans, and especially the poor among them, were not subject to numberless diseases, considering the quality of their food. This is an article in which singular circumstances attended them; for having been, for many years after the foundation of Mexico subjected to the most miserable kind of life upon the little islands of the lake, they were constrained by necessity to feed upon whatever they could find in the waters. During that disastrous time, they learned to eat, not only the roots of the marsh plants, water serpents, which abounded there, the *Axolotl*, *Atetepiz*, *Atopinan*, and other such little animals, inhabitants of the water; but even ants, marsh flies, and the very eggs of the same flies. They fished such quantities of those flies, called by them *Axajatl*, that they eat them, fed several kinds of birds with them, and carried them to market. They pounded them together, and made little balls of them, which they rolled up in leaves of maize, and boiled in water with nitre. Some historians who have tasted this food, pronounce it not disagreeable. From the eggs, which those flies deposit in great abundance on the rushes in the lake, they extracted that singular species of caviare, which they called *Abuaubtli*.

Not contented with feeding upon living things, they eat also a certain muddy substance that floats upon the waters of the lake, which they

BOOK VII.

SECT.  
 LXIV.  
 Aliment of  
 the Mexi-  
 cans.



BOOK VII. they dried in the sun, and preserved to make use of it as cheese, which it resembled in flavour and taste. They gave this substance the name of *Tecuitlatl*, or excrement of stones. Accustomed thus to those vile articles of food, they were unable to abandon them in the season of their greatest plenty; on which account the market was always seen full of innumerable species of raw, boiled, fried, and roasted little animals, which were sold there particularly to the poor. However, as soon as by their commerce with fish they were able to purchase better aliment, and to cultivate by the exertions of their industry the floating gardens of the lake, they entertained themselves with better provisions, and at their meals there was nothing wanting, as the conqueror says, either in respect to the plenty, variety, or nicety of their dishes (*g*).

Among the eatables, the first place is due to maize, which they called *Tlaolli*, a grain granted by Providence to that part of the world, instead of the corn of Europe, the rice of Asia, the millet of Africa, over all which it possesses some advantages; as besides its being wholesome, relishing, and more nutritive, it multiplies more, thrives equally in different climes, does not require so much culture, is not so delicate as corn, stands not in need, like rice, of a moist soil, nor is it hurtful to the health of the cultivator. They had several species of maize, differing in size, colour, and quality from each other. Of maize they made their bread, which is totally different from that of Europe in taste and appearance, and in the manner of making it, which they formerly had, and still continue to use. They put the grain to boil in water with a little lime; when it becomes soft, they rub it in their hands to strip off the skin; then pound it in the *Metlatl* (*b*), take out a little of the paste, and stretching it by beating it with both hands, they form the bread, after which they give it the last preparation in the *Comalli*. The form of the bread is round and flat, about eight inches in diameter, and one line or more in thickness; but they make their loaves or cakes still smaller and thinner, and for the nobles they make them as thin as our thickest paper. It was customary also to mix something

(*g*) See the first letter of Cortes, the history of Bernal Diaz, and the relation of the anonymous conqueror.

(*b*) The Spaniards call the *Metlatl* *metate*, the *Comalli* *comal*, of which we shall presently speak, and the *Atolli* *atole*.

*Mexican method of making Bread.*







else with the bread to make it still more wholesome and relishing. For persons of rank and circumstances, they used to make bread of red maize, mixing with it the beautiful flower *coatxontecoxochitl*, and several medicinal herbs, to diminish its heat to the stomach. This is the sort of bread which the Mexicans, and all the other nations of those extensive regions, have used until our time, preferring it to the best bread of wheat. Their example has been imitated by many Spaniards; but to speak impartially, this bread, although it is extremely wholesome and substantial, and when fresh made of a good taste, becomes rather disagreeable when stale. The making of bread, as well as the preparing and dressing of every kind of meat, has always among those nations been the peculiar occupation of their women. They were the persons who made it for their families, and who sold it in the market.

Besides bread, they made many other meats and drinks of maize, with different ingredients and preparations. The *atolli* is a gruel of maize, after it has been boiled, well-ground, dissolved in water, and strained. They put the strained liquor over a fire, and give it another boiling until it becomes of a certain thickness. The Spaniards think it insipid to the taste, but they give it commonly to sick persons, as a most salutary food, sweetening it with a little sugar, instead of honey, which is used by the Indians. To them it is so grateful they cannot live without it. It was formerly and still is their breakfast, and with it they bear the fatigues of agriculture, and other servile offices in which they are employed. Hernandez describes eighteen species of *atolli*, which differ both with regard to the seasoning ingredients, and the manner of preparing them.

Next to maize, the vegetables most in use were the cacao, the chia, and the French bean. Of the cacao they made several common drinks, and among others that which they called *Chocolatl*. They ground equal quantities of the cacao and the seeds of *Pocotl*, put them both with a proportionable quantity of water into a little pot, in which they stirred and turned them with that little indented instrument of wood, which the Italians call *frullo*, the Spaniards *molinillo*, and the English *milling-stick*; then they poured off the floating oily part into another vessel.



BOOK VII. Into the remainder they put a handful of paste of boiled maize, and boiled it for a certain time, after which they mixed it with the oily part, and took it when it was cool. This is the origin of the famous chocolate, which the cultivated nations of Europe have used in imitation of them, as well as the name and instruments for making it; although the name is a little corrupted, and the drink altered according to the language and taste of each nation. The Mexicans used to put in their chocolate, and other drinks which they made of the cacao, the *Tlilxochitl*, or vaniglia, the flower of the *Xochinacastli* (*k*), and the fruit of the *Mecaxochitl* (*l*), and sometimes also honey, as the Europeans put sugar, both to render it palatable and more wholesome.

Of the seed of the chia they made a most refreshing drink, which is still very common in that kingdom; and of this seed also, with maize, they made the *chianzotzoolatelli*, which was an exquisite drink much used by the ancients, particularly in time of war. The soldier, who carried with him a little bag of flour of maize and chia, thought himself amply provided. When necessary, he boiled the quantity he wished for, mixing a little honey of the *maguei* with it; and by means of this delicious and nourishing beverage (as Hernandez calls it), endured the ardour of the sun and the fatigues of war.

The Mexicans did not eat so much flesh as the Europeans; nevertheless, upon occasion of any banquet, and daily at the tables of the lords, different kinds of animals were served up; such as deer, rabbits, Mexican boars, *Tuze*, *Techichi*, which they fattened as the Europeans do hogs, and other animals of the land, the water, and the air, but the most common were turkeys and quails.

The fruits most used by them were the *mamei*, the *tlilzapotl*, the *cochitzapotl*, the *chietzapotl*, the ananas, the *chirionoja*, the *abuacatl*, a anona, the *pitahaja*, the *capolin*, or Mexican cherry, and different

(*k*) The tree of the *Xochinacastli* has long, strait, narrow leaves, of a dark green colour. Its flower consists of six petals, which are purple within, green without, and pleasingly odorous. From the resemblance of their figure to an ear, they were called by this name among the Mexicans, and by the Spaniards *orejucla*, or *little ear*. The fruit is angular, and of a bloody colour, and grows within a pod of six inches in length, and about one inch thick. It is peculiar to hot countries. The flower was greatly valued, and never wanting in the markets.

(*l*) The *Mecaxochitl* is a small flexible plant, whose leaves are large and thick, and the fruit resembles long pepper.

species of *Tune*, or Indian figs, which fruits well supplied the want of pears, apples, and peaches. BOOK VII.

Amongst all their plenty of foods the Mexicans were destitute of milk, and fat, as they had neither cows, sheep, goats, nor hogs. With respect to eggs, we do not know that they eat any, except those of turkeys and iguanas, the flesh of which they likewise did and still eat.

The usual seasoning to their food, besides salt, was great pepper and tomate, which have become equally common among the Spaniards of that country.


They drank also several sorts of wine, or beverages similar to them, of the maguei, the palm, of the stems of maize, and of the grain also, of which last, called *chicha*, almost all the historians of America make mention, as it is the kind most generally used in that new world. The most common with the Mexicans, and also the best was that of the maguei, called *octli* by them, and by the Spaniards *pulque* (*m*). The method of making it is this. When the maguei, or Mexican aloe, arrives at a certain height and maturity, they cut the stem, or rather the leaves while tender, of which the stem is formed, situated in the centre of the plant, after which there remains a certain cavity. They shave the internal surface of the large leaves which surround the cavity, and collect the sweet juice which distils from them in such abundance, that one single plant generally yields, in the space of six months, six hundred, and in the whole time of its fruitfulness more than two thousand pounds of juice (*n*). SECT. LXV.  
Wine.

They gather the juice from the cavity with a long narrow gourd, which serves instead of a more artificial contrivance, and pour it into a vessel until it ferments, which it usually does in less than twenty-

(*m*) *Pulque* is not a Spanish nor Mexican word, but is taken from the *Araucan* language which is spoke in Chili, in which the *Pulcu* is the general name for the beverages these Indians use to intoxicate themselves; it is difficult to say how the term has passed to Mexico.

(*n*) Betancourt says, that a maguei makes in six months twenty *arrobas* of pulque, which are more than six hundred Italian pounds. He might know this well, having been for many years a rector among the Indians. Hernandez affirms, that from one single plant are extracted fifty *anfore*. The Castilian *anfora*, which is smaller than the Roman, contains, according to the calculation of Mariana, five hundred and twelve ounces of wine, or common water. Supposing that the pulque does not weigh more than water, fifty *anfore* will be more than two thousand pounds.



BOOK VII.  four hours. To assist the fermentation, and make the beverage stronger, they infuse a certain herb which they name *Ocpatli*, or remedy of wine. The colour of this wine is white, the taste a little rough, and its strength sufficient to intoxicate, though not so much as that of the grape. In other respects it is a wholesome liquor, and valuable on many accounts as it is an excellent diuretic, and a powerful remedy against the diarrhœa. The consumption made of this liquor is surprising as it is useful, for the Spaniards become rich by it. The revenue produced by that alone which is consumed in the capital amounts annually to three hundred thousand crowns; one Mexican rial only being paid for every twenty-five Castilian pounds. The quantity of pulque, which was consumed in the capital in 1774, was two millions two hundred and fourteen thousand, two hundred ninety-four and half *arrobas*, or upwards of sixty-three millions eight hundred thousand Roman pounds, exclusive of that which was smuggled in there, and that which the privileged Indians sell in the great market-place.

SECT.  
LXVI.  
Dress.

The Mexicans were less singular in their dress than in their food. Their usual habit was quite simple, consisting solely of the *maxtlatl* and *tilmatli* in the men, and of the *cueitl*, and the *buepilli*, in the women. The *maxtlatl* was a large belt or girdle, the two ends of which hung down before and behind to cover the parts of shame. The *tilmatli* was a square mantle, about four feet long; the two ends were tied upon the breast, or upon one shoulder, as appears in our figures. The *cueitl*, or Mexican gown, was also a piece of square cloth, in which the women wrapped themselves from their waists down to the middle of the leg. The *buepilli* was a little under vest, or waistcoat, without sleeves.

The dress of the poor people was made of the thread of the maguei, or mountain palm, or at best the cloth of coarse cotton; but those of better station wore the finest cotton, embellished with various colours, and figures of animals, or flowers, or wove with feathers, or the fine hair of the rabbit, and adorned with various little figures of gold and loose locks of cotton hanging about the girdle or *maxtlatl*. The men used to wear two or three mantles, and the women three or four vests, and as many gowns, putting the longest undermost, so as that a part of each of them might be seen. The lords wore in winter waist-coats

*A Noble.*



*A Woman of Rank.*







coats of cotton, interwoven with soft feathers, or the hair of the rabbit. Women of rank wore, besides the huepilli, an upper vest, something like the surplice or gown of our ecclesiastics, but larger and with longer sleeves (o). BOOK VII.

Their shoes were nothing but soles of leather, or coarse cloth of the maguei, tied with strings, and only covered the under part of the foot. The kings and lords adorned the strings with rich ribbands of gold and jewels.

All the Mexicans wore their hair long, and were dishonoured by being shaved, or having it clipped, except the virgins consecrated to the service of the temples. The women wore it loose, the men tied in different forms, and adorned their heads with fine plumes, both when they danced and when they went to war. SECT.  
LXVII.  
Ornaments.

It would be difficult to find a nation which accompanied so much simplicity of dress, with so much vanity and luxury in other ornaments of their persons. Besides feathers and jewels, with which they used to adorn their cloaths, they wore ear-rings, pendants at the under-lip, and many likewise at their noses, necklaces, bracelets for the hands and arms, and also certain rings like collars about their legs. The ear-rings and pendants of the poor were shells, pieces of crystal, amber, or some other shining little stone; but the rich wore pearls, emeralds, amethysts, or other gems, set in gold.

Their household furniture was by no means correspondent to this passion for personal finery. Their beds were nothing else than one or two coarse mats of rushes, to which the rich added fine palm mats, and sheets of cotton; and the lords, linen wove with feathers. The pillow of the poor was a stone or piece of wood; that of the rich, probably of cotton. The common people did not cover themselves in bed with any thing else than the tilmatli, or mantle, but the higher ranks and nobles made use of counterpanes of cotton and feathers. At dinner, instead of a table, they spread a mat upon the ground; and they used napkins, plates, porringers, earthen pots, jugs, and other vessels of fine clay, but not, as we can discover, either knives or forks. Their chairs were low seats of wood and rushes, or palm, or a kind SECT.  
LXVIII.  
Domestic furniture and employ-  
ments.

(o) We have spoken elsewhere of the habits of the kings, priests, and military persons.



BOOK VII. of reed called *icpalli* (*p*). No house wanted the *metlatl*, or *comalli*. The *metlatl* was the stone in which they ground their maize, and the cacao, as is represented in our figure of their mode of making bread. This instrument is still extremely common in all New Spain, and over the greatest part of America. The Europeans have also adopted it, and in Italy and elsewhere the chocolate-makers use it to grind the cacao. The *comalli* was, and still is, being as much used as the *metlatl*, a round and rather hollow pan, which is about an inch, thick and about fifteen in diameter.

The drinking vessels of the Mexicans were made of a fruit similar to gourds, which grow, in hot countries, on trees of a middling size. Some of them are large and perfectly round, which they call *Xicalli* (*q*), and others smaller and cylindrical, which they give the name of *Tecomatl*. Both these fruits are solid and heavy: their rind is hard, woody, and of a dark green colour, and the seeds are like those of gourds. The *xicalli* is about eight inches in diameter; the *tecomatl* is not so long, and about four fingers in thickness. Each fruit when divided in the middle made two equal vessels; they cut out all the seed, and gave them a varnish with a particular mineral earth, of a pleasing smell, and of different colours, particularly a fine red. At present they are frequently gilt with silver and gold.

The Mexicans made use of no candlesticks, nor wax, nor tallow candles, nor of oil to make light; for although they had many kinds of oil, they never employed it otherwise than in medicine, in painting, and in varnishes; and although they extracted a great quantity of wax from the honey-combs, they either did not know, or were not at the pains to make lights with it. In maritime countries they made use of shining beetles for that purpose; but in general they employed torches of *ocotl*, which, although they made a fine light, and yielded

(*p*) The Spaniards corrupt the word into *Equipales*.

(*q*) The Spaniards of Mexico called the *Xicalli* *Xicara*. The Spaniards of Europe adopted this word to signify the little cup for taking chocolate, and thence came the Italian *Chicchera*. Bonare makes mention of the tree *Xicalli*, under the name of *Calebassier d' Amerique*, and says, that in New Spain, it is known under the names of *Choyne*, *Cujete*, and *Hyguero*; but this is a mistake. The name *Hibuero* (not *Hyguero*) was that which the Indians of the Island of Hispaniola gave to this tree; the Spanish conquerors made use of it formerly, but no use was made of it afterwards in New Spain. None of the other trees were ever heard of by us in those countries.

an agreeable' odour, smoked and soiled their habitations with soot. One of the European customs which they chiefly prized upon the arrival of the Spaniards, was that of candles; but those people had certainly little occasion for candles, as they devoted all the hours of the night to repose, after employing all those of the day in business and toil. The men laboured at their different professions, and the women baked, wove, embroidered, prepared victuals, and cleaned their houses. All daily made orisons to their gods, and burned copal in honour of them, and therefore no house, however poor the possessor, wanted idols or censers.

The method which the Mexicans and other nations practised to kindle fire, was the same which the ancient shepherds of Europe employed (*r*), by the friction of two pieces of wood. The Mexicans generally used the achiote, which is the *roucou* of the French. Boturini affirms, that they struck fire also from flint.

After a few hours of labour in the morning they took their breakfast, which was most commonly *atolli*, or gruel of maize, and their dinner after mid-day; but among all the historians of Mexico, we have found no mention of their supper. They ate little, but they drank frequently, either of the wine of the maguei, or maize, or of chia, or some other drink of the cacao, and sometimes plain water.

After dining, the lords used to compose themselves to sleep with the smoke of tobacco (*s*). This plant was greatly in use among the Mexicans. They make various plasters with it, and took it not only in smoke at the mouth, but also in snuff at the nose. In order to smoke it, they put the leaves with the gum of liquid amber, and other hot, warm, and odorous herbs, into a little pipe of wood, or reed, or some

SECT.  
LXIX.  
The use of  
tobacco.

(*r*) *Calidæ morus, laurus; bederæ, & omnes ex quibus igniaria fiunt. Exploratorum hoc usus in castris Pastorumque reperit; quoniam ad excutiendum ignem non semper lapidis est occasio. Territur ergo lignum ligno, ignemque concipit attritu, excipiente materia aridi fomitis, fungi, vel foliorum facilius conceptum.* Plinius Hist. Nat. lib. xvi. c. 40. The same thing is observed in the second book of the *Questiones Naturales* of Seneca, and also in other ancient writers.

(*s*) *Tabaco* is a name taken from the *Haitine* language. The Mexicans had two species of tobacco, very different in the size of the plant and the leaves, in the figure of the flower and the colour of the seed. The smallest, which is the common one, was called by them *Picietl*, and the largest *Quanjettl*. This last becomes as high as a moderate tree. Its flower is not divided into five parts like that of the *Picietl*, but only cut into six or seven angles. These plants vary much according to clime, not only in the quality of the tobacco, but also in the size of the leaves and other circumstances, on which account several authors have multiplied the species.



## BOOK VII.

other more valuable substance. They received the smoke by sucking the pipe and shutting the nostrils with their fingers, so that it might pass by the breath more easily towards the lungs. Who would have believed that the use of tobacco, which necessity made those phlegmatic nations invent, would have become the vice or custom of almost all the nations of the world; and that so humble a plant, of which the Europeans wrote and spoke so unfavourably, would have made one of the greatest revenues of the kingdoms of Europe? But what ought to excite still greater wonder, is, that although the use of tobacco is now so common among those nations who formerly despised it, it is now so rare among its inventors, that there are extremely few of the Indians of New Spain who take it in smoke, and none at all who use it in snuff.

SECT.  
LXX.  
Plants used  
instead of  
soap.

As the Mexicans wanted candles to make light, they also were without soap to wash with, although there were animals from which they might have obtained it (*t*); but they supplied that deficiency by a fruit and a root. The fruit was that of the *copalxocotl*, a tree of moderate size, which is found in Michuacan, Yucatan, Mizteca, and elsewhere (*u*). The pulp, that is under the rind of the fruit, which is white, viscous, and very bitter, makes water white, raises a froth, and serves like soap to wash and clean linen. The root is that of the *amolli*, a small plant, but very common in that country, for which *Saponaria Americana* seems to be a more proper name, as it is not very dissimilar to the *Saponaria* of the old continent; but the *amolli* is more used to wash the body now, and more particularly the head, than for cloaths (*x*).

We have now given all that we think worthy of credit and public relation concerning the political œconomy of the Mexicans. Such was their government, their laws, their customs, and their arts, when the Spaniards arrived in the country of Anahuac, the war and memorable events of which make the subject of the following books.

(*t*) We have heard that an excellent soap is obtained from the *epatl*, or *Zorriglio*.

(*u*) Hernandez makes mention of it under the name of *C palxocotl*, but says nothing of its detergent quality; Betancourt speaks of it under the name of the *soap-tree*, by which it is known among the Spaniards; and Valmont describes it under the name of *Savonier*, and *Saponaria Americana*. The root of this tree also is used instead of soap, but it is not so good as the fruit.

(*x*) There is a species of *amolli*, the root of which dyes hair the colour of gold. We saw this singular effect produced upon the hair of an old man.

# A P P E N D I X.

## THE MEXICAN CENTURY.

Years.	Years.
I. TOCHTLI.	I. TECPATL.
II. Acatl.	II. Calli.
III. Tecpatl.	III. Tochtli.
IV. Calli.	IV. Acatl.
V. Tochtli.	V. Tecpatl.
VI. Acatl.	VI. Calli.
VII. Tecpatl.	VII. Tochtli.
VIII. Calli.	VIII. Acatl.
IX. Tochtli.	IX. Tecpatl.
X. Acatl.	X. Calli.
XI. Tecpatl.	XI. Tochtli.
XII. Calli.	XII. Acatl.
XIII. Tochtli.	XIII. Tecpatl.
I. ACATL.	I. CALLI.
II. Tecpatl.	II. Tochtli.
III. Calli.	III. Acatl.
IV. Tochtli.	IV. Tecpatl.
V. Acatl.	V. Calli.
VI. Tecpatl.	VI. Tochtli.
VII. Calli.	VII. Acatl.
VIII. Tochtli.	VIII. Tecpatl.
IX. Acatl.	IX. Calli.
X. Tecpatl.	X. Tochtli.
XI. Calli.	XI. Acatl.
XII. Tochtli.	XII. Tecpatl.
XIII. Acatl.	XIII. Calli.

The years wrote with large characters are those from which the four small periods of thirteen years, of which their century was composed, began.



## M E X I C A N Y E A R S

From the Foundation to the Conquest of MEXICO, compared  
with Christian Years.

Those printed with large Characters are the first of every Period.  
Those marked with an Asterisk are secular Years.

Mexican Years.	Christian Years.	Mexican Years.	Christian Years.
II. Calli -	- 1325 (a)	III. Tecpatl -	- 1352 (c)
III. Tochtli -	- 1326	IV. Calli -	- 1353 (d)
IV. Acatl -	- 1327	V. Tochtli -	- 1354
V. Tecpatl -	- 1328	VI. Acatl -	- 1355
VI. Calli -	- 1329	VII. Tecpatl -	- 1356
VII. Tochtli -	- 1330	VIII. Calli -	- 1357
VIII. Acatl -	- 1331	IX. Tochtli -	- 1358
IX. Tecpatl -	- 1332	X. Acatl -	- 1359
X. Calli -	- 1333	XI. Tecpatl -	- 1360
XI. Tochtli -	- 1334	XII. Calli -	- 1361
XII. Acatl -	- 1335	XIII. Tochtli -	- 1362
XIII. Tecpatl -	- 1336	I. ACATL -	- 1363
I. CALLI -	- 1337	II. Tecpatl -	- 1364
II. Tochtli -	- 1338 (b)	III. Calli -	- 1365
III. Acatl -	- 1339	IV. Tochtli -	- 1366
IV. Tecpatl -	- 1340	V. Acatl -	- 1367
V. Calli -	- 1341	VI. Tecpatl -	- 1368
VI. Tochtli -	- 1342	VII. Calli -	- 1369
VII. Acatl -	- 1343	VIII. Tochtli -	- 1370
VIII. Tecpatl -	- 1344	IX. Acatl -	- 1371
IX. Calli -	- 1345	X. Tecpatl -	- 1372
X. Tochtli -	- 1347	XI. Calli -	- 1373
XI. Acatl -	- 1347	XII. Tochtli -	- 1374
XII. Tecpatl -	- 1348	XIII. Acatl -	- 1375
XIII. Calli -	- 1349	I. TECPATL -	- 1376
*I. TOCHTLI -	- 1350	II. Calli -	- 1377
II. Acatl -	- 1351	III. Tochtli -	- 1378

(a) Foundation of Mexico.

(b) Division of those of Tenochcho and Tlatelolco.

(c) Acamapitzin, first king of Mexico.

(d) Quaquauhitzahuac, first king of Tlatelolco.

IV. Acatl

Mexican Years.	Christian Years.	Mexican Years.	Christian Years.
IV. Acatl -	1379	XII. Calli -	1413 ( <i>i</i> )
V. Tecpatl -	1380	XIII. Tochtli -	1414
VI. Calli -	1381	I. ACATL -	1415
VII. Tochtli -	1382	II. Tecpatl -	1416
VIII. Acatl -	1383	III. Calli -	1417
IX. Tecpatl -	1384	IV. Tochtli -	1418
X. Calli -	1385	V. Acatl -	1419
XI. Tochtli -	1386	VI. Tecpatl -	1420
XII. Acatl -	1387	VII. Calli -	1421
XIII. Tecpatl -	1388	VIII. Tochtli -	1422 ( <i>k</i> )
I. CALLI -	1389 ( <i>e</i> )	IX. Acatl -	1423 ( <i>l</i> )
II. Tochtli -	1390	X. Tecpatl -	1424
III. Acatl -	1391	XI. Calli -	1425 ( <i>m</i> )
IV. Tecpatl -	1392	XII. Tochtli -	1426 ( <i>n</i> )
V. Calli -	1393	XIII. Acatl -	1427
VI. Tochtli -	1394	I. TECPATL -	1428
VII. Acatl -	1395	II. Calli -	1429
VIII. Tecpatl -	1396	III. Tochtli -	1430
IX. Calli -	1397	IV. Acatl -	1431
X. Tochtli -	1398	V. Tecpatl -	1432
XI. Acatl -	1399 ( <i>f</i> )	VI. Calli -	1433
XII. Tecpatl -	1400	VII. Tochtli -	1434
XIII. Calli -	1401	VIII. Acatl -	1435
*I. TOCHTLI -	1402	IX. Tecpatl -	1436 ( <i>o</i> )
II. Acatl -	1403	X. Calli -	1437
III. Tecpatl -	1404	XI. Tochtli -	1438
IV. Calli -	1405	XII. Acatl -	1439
V. Tochtli -	1406 ( <i>g</i> )	XIII. Tecpatl -	1440
VI. Acatl -	1407	I. CALLI -	1441 ( <i>p</i> )
VII. Tecpatl -	1408	II. Tochtli -	1442
VIII. Calli -	1409	III. Acatl -	1443
IX. Tochtli -	1410 ( <i>b</i> )	IV. Tecpatl -	1444
X. Acatl -	1411	V. Calli -	1445
XI. Tecpatl -	1412	VI. Tochtli -	1446 ( <i>q</i> )

(*e*) Huitzilihuitl, second king of Mexico.

(*g*) Ixtlilxochitl, king of Acolhuacan.

(*i*) Tezozomoc, the tyrant.

(*l*) Itzcoatl, fourth king of Mexico.

(*n*) Nezahualcojotl, king of Acolhuacan, and Totoquihuatzin king of Tacuba.

(*o*) Montezuma Ilhuicamina, fifth king of Mexico.

Tlatelolco.

(*q*) Inundation of Mexico.

(*f*) Tlacateotl, second king of Tlatelolco.

(*b*) Chimalpopoca, third king of Mexico.

(*k*) Maxtlaton, the tyrant.

(*m*) Conquest of Azcapotzalco.

(*p*) Moquihuix, fourth king of



Mexican Years.	Christian Years.	Mexican Years.	Christian Years.
VII. Acatl -	- 1447	II. Calli -	- 1481
VIII. Tecpatl -	- 1448	III. Tochtli -	- 1482 (y)
IX. Calli -	- 1449	IV. Acatl -	- 1483
X. Tochtli -	- 1450	V. Tecpatl -	- 1484
XI. Acatl -	- 1451	VI. Calli -	- 1485
XII. Tecpatl -	- 1452	VII. Tochtli -	- 1486 (z)
XIII. Calli -	- 1453	VIII. Acatl -	- 1487 (A)
*I. TOCHTLI -	- 1454	IX. Tecpatl -	- 1488
II. Acatl -	- 1455	X. Calli -	- 1489
III. Tecpatl -	- 1456	XI. Tochtli -	- 1490
IV. Calli -	- 1457 (r)	XII. Acatl -	- 1491
V. Tochtli -	- 1458	XIII. Tecpatl -	- 1492
VI. Acatl -	- 1459	I. CALLI -	- 1493
VII. Tecpatl -	- 1460	II. Tochtli -	- 1494
VIII. Calli -	- 1461	III. Acatl -	- 1495
IX. Tochtli -	- 1462	IV. Tecpatl -	- 1496
X. Acatl -	- 1463	V. Calli -	- 1497
XI. Tecpatl -	- 1464 (s)	VI. Tochtli -	- 1498 (B)
XII. Calli -	- 1465	VII. Acatl -	- 1499
XIII. Tochtli -	- 1466	VIII. Tecpatl -	- 1500
I. ACATL -	- 1467	IX. Calli -	- 1501
II. Tecpatl -	- 1468	X. Tochtli -	- 1502 (C)
III. Calli -	- 1469 (t)	XI. Acatl -	- 1503
IV. Tochtli -	- 1470 (u)	XII. Tecpatl -	- 1504
V. Acatl -	- 1471	XIII. Calli -	- 1505
VI. Tecpatl -	- 1472	I. TOCHTLI -	- 1506
VII. Calli -	- 1473	II. Acatl -	- 1507
VIII. Tochtli -	- 1474	III. Tecpatl -	- 1508
IX. Acatl -	- 1475	IV. Calli -	- 1509 (D)
X. Tecpatl -	- 1476	V. Tochtli -	- 1510
XI. Calli -	- 1477 (x)	VI. Acatl -	- 1511
XII. Tochtli -	- 1478	VII. Tecpatl -	- 1512
XIII. Acatl -	- 1479	VIII. Calli -	- 1513
I. TECPATL -	- 1480	IX. Tochtli -	- 1514

(r) Famous war of Cuetlachtlan.

(t) Chimalpopoca, king of Tacuba

(x) Tizoc, seventh king of Mexico.

(z) Dedication of the greater temple.

(B) New inundation of Mexico.

(D) Memorable event of the princefs Papantzin.

(s) Axajacatl, sixth king of Mexico.

(u) Nezahualpilli, king of Acolhuacan.

(y) Ahuizotl, eighth king of Mexico.

(A) Totoquihuatzin, second king of Tacuba.

(C) Montezuma Xocojotzin, ninth king of Mexico.

X. Acatl	-	-	1515	I. ACATL	-	-	1519 (F)
XI. Tecpatl	-	-	1516 (E)	II. Tecpatl	-	-	1520 (G)
XII. Calli	-	-	1517	III. Calli	-	-	1521 (H)
XIII. Tochtli	-	-	1518				

The exactness of this Table will appear from our Second Differentiation.

(E) Cacamatzin, king of Acolhuacan.

(F) Entry of the Spaniards into Mexico.

(G) Cuitlahuatzin, tenth king, and Quauhtemotzin, eleventh king of Mexico, death of Montezuma, and defeat of the Spaniards.

(H) The taking of Mexico, and fall of the empire.



## M E X I C A N C A L E N D A R,

From the Year I Tochtli, the first of the Century.

## A T L A C A H U A L C O First Month.

Modern Style.	Mexican Days.	Festivals.
February 26	I. CIPACTLI	The great secular festival. Festival of <i>Tlalocateuētlī</i> , and the other gods of water, with the sacrifice of infants, and the gladiatorian sacrifice.
27	II. Ehēcatl	
28	III. Calli	
March 1	IV. Cuetzpalin	
2	V. Coatl	
3	VI. Miquiztli	
4	VII. Mazatl	
5	VIII. Tochtli	
6	IX. Atl	
7	X. Itzcuintli	
8	XI. Ozomatli	Nocturnal sacrifice of fattened prisoners.
9	XII. Malinalli	
10	XIII. Acatl	
11	I. OCELOTL	
12	II. Quauhtli	
13	III. Cozcaquauhtli	
14	IV. Olin	
15	V. Tecpatl	
16	VI. Quiahuitl	
17	VII. Xochitl	

## T L A C A X I P E H U A L I Z T L I Second Month.

18	VIII. Cipaētlī	The great festival of Xipe, god of the goldsmiths, with sacrifices of prisoners and military exercises.
19	IX. Ehēcatl	
20	X. Calli	Fast of the owners of prisoners for twenty days.
21	XI. Cuetzpalin	
22	XII. Coatl	
23	XIII. Miquiztli	
24	I. MAZATL.	

The days marked in large characters are those which began the small periods of thirteen days.

March

Modern Style.	Mexican Days.	Festivals.
March 25	II. Tochtli	
26	III. Atl	
27	IV. Itzcuintli	
28	V. Ozomàtli	
29	VI. Malinalli	
30	VII. Acatl	Festival of the god <i>Cbicoma-</i>
31	VIII. Ocelotl	<i>catl.</i>
April 1	IX. Quauhtli	Festival of the god <i>Tequixtli-</i>
2	X. Cozcaquauhtli	<i>matebuatl.</i>
3	XI. Olin	
4	XII. Tecpatl	
5	XIII. Quiahuitl	Festival of the god <i>Chancoti,</i>
6	I. XOCHITL.	with nocturnal sacrifices.

## T O Z O Z T O N T L I Third Month.

7	II. Cipactli	Watch kept by the ministers of
8	III. Ehècatl	the temples every night of
9	IV. Calli	this month.
10	V. Cuetzpalin	
11	VI. Coatl	The second festival of the gods
12	VII. Miquitzli	of water, with sacrifices of
13	VIII. Mazatl	children, and oblations of
14	IX. Tochtli	flowers.
15	X. Atl	
16	XI. Itzcuintli	
17	XII. Ozomatli	
18	XIII. Malinalli	
19	I. ACATL	Festival of the goddess <i>Coatli-</i>
20	II. Ocelotl	<i>cue</i> , with oblations of flow-
21	III. Quauhtli	ers, and a procession.
22	IV. Cozcaquauhtli	
23	V. Olin	
24	VI. Tecpatl	
25	VII. Quiahuitl	
26	VIII. Xochitl.	



## HUEITZOZOTLI Fourth Month.

Modern Style.	Mexican Days.	Festivals.
April 27	IX. Cipactli	Watch kept in the temples, and a general fast.
28	X. Ehecatl	
29	XI. Calli	
30	XII. Cuetzpalin	Festival of <i>Centeotl</i> , with sacrifices of human victims and quails.
May 1	XIII. Coatl	
2	I. MIQUIZTLI	
3	II. Mazatl	Solemn convocation for the grand festival of the following month.
4	III. Tochtli	
5	IV. Atl	
6	V. Itzcuintli	
7	VI. Ozomatli	
8	VII. Malinalli	
9	VIII. Acatl	Fast in preparation of the following festival.
10	IX. Ocelotl	
11	X. Quauhtli	
12	XI. Cozcaquauhtli	
13	XII. Olin	
14	XIII. Tecpatl	
15	I. QUIAHUITL	
16	II. Xochitl	

## TOXCATL Fifth Month.

17	III. Cipactli	The grand festival of <i>Texcatlipoca</i> , with a solemn penitential procession, the sacrifice of a prisoner, and dismissal of all the marriageable youth from the temple.
18	IV. Ehecatl	
19	V. Calli	
20	VI. Cuetzpalin	
21	VII. Coatl	
22	VIII. Miquiztli	
23	IX. Mazatl	The first festival of <i>Huitzilopochtli</i> . Sacrifices of human victims and quails. Solemn incense-offering of Chapopotli, or bitumen of Judea. Solemn dance of the king, the priests, and the people.
24	X. Tochtli	
25	XI. Atl.	
26	XII. Itzcuintli	
27	XIII. Ozomatli	
28	I. MALINALLI.	
29	II. Acatl	
30	III. Ocelotl	
31	IV. Quauhtli	

June

Modern Style.	Mexican Days.	Festivals.
June 1	V. Cozcaquauhtli	
2	VI. Olin	
3	VII. Tecpatl	
4	VIII. Quiahuitl	
5	IX. Xochitl	

## ETZALCUALIZTLI Sixth Month.

6	X. Cipactli	
7	XI. Ehècatl	
8	XII. Calli	
9	XIII. Cuetzpalin	
10	I. COATL	The third festival of the gods of water, with sacrifices and a dance.
11	II. Miquiztli	
12	III. Mazatl	
13	IV. Tochtli	
14	V. Atl	
15	VI. Itzcuintli	
16	VII. Ozomàtli	
17	VIII. Malinalli	
18	IX. Acatl	
19	X. Ocelotl	
20	XI. Quauhtli	
21	XII. Cozcaquauhtli	
22	XIII. Olin	
23	I. TECPATL	
24	II. Quiahuitl	
25	III. Xochitl	Punishments of priests negli- gent in the service of the temple.

## TECUILHUITONTLI Seventh Month.

26	IV. Cipactli	
27	V. Ehècatl	
28	VI. Calli	
29	VII. Cuetzpalin	
30	VIII. Coatl	
July 1	IX. Miquiztli	
2	X. Mazatl	
3	XI. Tochtli	
4	XII. Atl	
5	XIII. Itzcuintli	Festival of Huixtocihuatl, with sacrifices of prisoners, and a dance of the priests.



Modern Style.	Mexican Days.	Festivals.
July 6	I. OZOMATLI	
7	II. Malinalli	
8	III. Acatl	
9	IV. Ocelotl	
10	V. Quauhtli	
11	VI. Cozcaquauhtli	
12	VII. Olin	
13	VIII. Tecpatl	
14	IX. Quiahuitl	
15	X. Xochitl	

## HUEITECUILHUITL Eighth Month.

16	XI. Cipaçtli	The second festival of <i>Centeotl</i> , with the sacrifice of a female slave; illumination of the temple, dance, and alms- giving.
17	XII. Ehècatl	
18	XIII. Calli	Festival of <i>Maculitochtli</i> .
19	I. CUETZPALIN	
20	II. Coatl	
21	III. Miquiztli	
22	IV. Mazatl	
23	V. Tochtli	
24	VI. Atl	
25	VII. Itzcuintli	
26	VIII. Ozomatli	
27	IX. Malinalli	
28	X. Acatl	
29	XI. Ocelotl	
30	XII. Quauhtli	
31	XIII. Cozcaquauhtli	
August 1	I. OLIN	
2	II. Tecpatl	
3	III. Quiahuitl	
4	IV. Xochitl	

## TLAXOCHIMACO Ninth Month.

5	V. Cipaçtli	Festival of <i>Macuilcipaçtli</i> .
6	VI. Ehècatl	
7	VII. Calli	
8	VIII. Cuetzpalin.	
9	IX. Coatl	

August

Modern Style.	Mexican Days.	Festivals.
August 10	X. Miquiztli	The second festival of <i>Huitzilopochtli</i> , with sacrifices of prisoners, oblations of flowers, general dance, and solemn banquet.
11	XI. Mazatl	
12	XII. Tochtli	
13	XIII. Atl	
14	I. ITZCUINTLI	
15	II. Ozomatli	Festival of <i>Facateuctli</i> , god of the merchants, with sacrifices and entertainments.
16	III. Malinalli	
17	IV. Acatl	
18	V. Ocelotl	
19	VI. Quauhtli	
20	VII. Cozcaquauhtli	
21	VIII. Olin	
22	IX. Tecpatl	
23	X. Quiahuitl.	
24	XI. Xochitl	

## X O C O H U E T Z I Tenth Month.

25	XII. Cipactli	The festival of <i>Xiuheteuctli</i> , god of fire, with a solemn dance, and sacrifice of prisoners.
26	XIII. Ehècatl	
27	I. CALLI	
28	II. Cuetzpalin	
29	III. Coatl	
30	IV. Miquiztli	All festivals cease during those five days.
31	V. Mazatl	
September 1	VI. Tochtli	
2	VII. Atl	
3	VIII. Itzcuintli	
4	IX. Ozomatli	
5	X. Malinalli	
6	XI. Acatl	
7	XII. Ocelotl	
8	XIII. Quauhtli	
9	I. COZCAQUAU-TLI	
10	II. Olin	
11	III. Tecpatl	
12	IV. Quiahuitl	
13	V. Xochitl	



## OCHPANIZTLI Eleventh Month.

Modern Style.	Mexican Days:	Festivals.
September 14	VI. Cipactli	Dance preparatory to the following festival.
15	VII. Ehècatl	
16	VIII. Calli	
17	IX. Cuetzpalin	
18	X. Coatl	
19	XI. Miquiztli	Festival of <i>Teteoinan</i> , mother of the gods, with the sacrifice of a female slave.
20	XII. Mazatl	
21	XIII. Tochtli	
22	I. ATL	
23	II. Itzcuintli	
24	III. Ozomatli	The third feast of the goddess <i>Centeotl</i> in the temple Xiuhcalco, with a procession and sacrifices.
25	IV. Malinalli	
26	V. Acatl	
27	VI. Ocelotl	
28	VII. Quauhtli	
29	VIII. Cozcaquauhtli	
30	IX. Olin	
October 1	X. Tecpatl	
2	XI. Quiahuitl	
3	XII. Tochtli	

## TEOTLECO Twelfth Month.

4	XIII. Cipactli	Festival of <i>Chiucnabuitzcuinli</i> , <i>Nabualpilli</i> , and <i>Centeotl</i> , gods of the lapidaries.
5	I. EHECATL	
6	II. Calli	
7	III. Cuetzpalin	
8	IV. Coatl	
9	V. Miquiztli	
10	VI. Mazatl	
11	VII. Tochtli	
12	VIII. Atl	
13	IX. Itzcuintli	
14	X. Ozomatli	
15	XI. Malinalli	
16	XII. Acatl	
17	XIII. Ocelotl	
18	I. QUAUHTLI	

Modern Style.	Mexican Days.	Festivals.
October 19	II. Cozcaquauhtli	Watch kept for the following festival.
20	III. Olin	
21	IV. Tecpatl	Festival of the arrival of the gods, with a great supper and sacrifices of prisoners.
22	V. Quiahuitl	
23	VI. Xochitl	

## T E P E I L H U I T L Thirteenth Month.

November	24	VII. Cipactli	Festival of the gods of the mountains, with the sacrifices of four female slaves and a prisoner.
	25	VIII. Ehècatl	
	26	IX. Calli	Festival of the god <i>Tochinco</i> , with the sacrifice of a prisoner.
	27	X. Cuetzpalin	
	28	XI. Coatl	Festival of <i>Nappateuctli</i> , with the sacrifice of a prisoner.
	29	XII. Miquiztli	
	30	XIII. Mazatl	Festival of <i>Centzontotochtin</i> , god of wine, with the sacrifice of three slaves of three different places.
	31	I. TOCHTLI.	
	1	II. Atl	
	2	III. Itzcuintli	
	3	IV. Ozomatli	
	4	V. Malinalli	
	5	VI. Acatl	
	6	VII. Ocelotl	
	7	VIII. Quauhtli	
	8	IX. Cozcaquauhtli	
	9	X. Olin	
	10	XI. Tecpatl	
	11	XII. Quiahuitl	
	12	XIII. Xochitl *	

## Q U E C H O L L I Fourteenth Month.

13	I. CIPACTL	The fast of four days, in preparation for the following festival.
14	II. Ehècatl	
15	III. Calli	Festival of <i>Mixcoatl</i> , god of the chase; a general chase; procession and sacrifice of animals.
16	IV. Cuetzpalin	
17	V. Coatl	
18	VI. Miquiztli	
19	VII. Mazatl	

\* Here ends the first cycle of two hundred and sixty days, or twenty periods of thirteen days.



Modern Style.	Mexican Days.	Festivals.
November 20	VIII. Tochtli	Festival of <i>Tlamatzincatl</i> , with sacrifices of prisoners.
21	IX. Atl.	
22	X. Itzcuintli	
23	XI. Ozomatli.	
24	XII. Malinalli	
25	XIII. Acatl	
26	I. OCELOTL	
27	II. Quauhtli	
28	III. Cozcaquauhtli	
29	IV. Olin	
30	V. Tecpatl	
December 1	VI. Quiahuitl	
2	VII. Xochitl	

## PANQUETZALIZTLI Fifteenth Month.

3	VIII. Cipaçtli	The third and principal festival of <i>Huitzilopochtli</i> and his companions. Severe fast, solemn procession. Sacrifices of prisoners and quails, and the eating of the statue of paste of that god.
4	IX. Ehècatl	
5	X. Calli	
6	XI. Cuetzpalin	
7	XII. Coatl	
8	XIII. Miquiztli	
9	I. MAZATL	
10	II. Tochtli	
11	III. Atl	
12	IV. Itzcuintli	
13	V. Ozomatli	
14	VI. Malinalli	
15	VII. Acatl.	
16	VIII. Ocelotl	
17	IX. Quauhtli	
18	X. Cozcaquauhtli	
19	XI. Olin	
20	XII. Tecpatl	
21	XIII. Quiahuitl	
22	I. XOCHITL	

# A P P E N D I X.

## A T E M O Z T L I Sixteenth Month.

Modern Style.	Mexican Days.	Festivals.
December 23	II. Cipactli	
24	III. Ehècatl	
25	IV. Calli	
26	V. Cuetzpalin	
27	VI. Coatl	
28	VII. Miquiztli	
29	VIII. Mazatl	
30	IX. Tochtli	
31	X. Atl	
January 1	XI. Itzcuintli.	
2	XII. Ozomatli	
3	XIII. Malinalli.	
4	I. ACATL	
5	II. Ocelotl	
6	III. Quauhtli	
7	IV. Cozcaquauhtli	Fast of four days in preparation of the following festival.
8	V. Olin	
9	VI. Tecpatl	
10	VII. Quiahuitl	The fourth festival of the gods of water, with a procession and sacrifices.
11	VIII. Xochitl.	

## T I T I T L Seventeenth Month.

12	IX. Cipactli	
13	X. Ehècatl	
14	XI. Calli	Festival of the goddesses <i>Ilamateuctli</i> , with a dance and sacrifice of a female slave.
15	XII. Cuetzpalin	
16	XIII. Coatl	
17	I. MIQUIZTLI	Festival of <i>Mictlantecuētlī</i> , god of hell, with the nocturnal sacrifice of a prisoner.
18	II. Mazatl	
19	III. Tochtli.	
20	IV. Atl	
21	V. Itzcuintli	
22	VI. Ozomatli	The second festival of <i>Jacateuctli</i> , god of the merchants, with the sacrifice of a prisoner.
23	VII. Malinalli.	
24	VIII. Acatl.	

January



Modern Style.	Mexican Days.	Festivals
January 25	IX. Ocelotl	
26	X. Quauhtli	
27	XI. Cozcaquauhtli	
28	XII. Olin	
29	XIII. Tecpatl	
30	I. QUIAHUITL.	
31	II. Xochitl	

## I Z C A L L I Eighteenth Month.

February 1	III. Cipactli	
2	IV. Ehècatl	
3	V. Calli	
4	VI. Cuetzpalin	
5	VII. Coatl	
6	VIII. Miquiztli	
7	IX. Mazatl	
8	X. Tochtli	
9	XI. Atl	
10	XII. Itzcuintli	General chace for the sacrifices of the next festival.
11	XIII. Ozomatli	
12	I. MALINALLI	
13	II. Acatl	
14	III. Ocelotl	
15	IV. Quauhtli	
16	V. Cozcaquauhtli	
17	VI. Olin	The second festival of <i>Xiub-teuētli</i> , god of fire, with sacrifices of animals.
18	VII. Tecpatl	
19	VIII. Quiahuitl	
20	IX. Xochitl.	Renewal of fire in the houses.

## N E M O N T E M I, or useless Days.

21	X. Cipactli	During these days there was no festival.
22	XI. Ehècatl	
23	XII. Calli	
24	XIII. Cuetzpalin	
25	I. COATL	

The following year II. Acatl, begins with II. *Miquiztli*, and continues in the same order.

E X P L A -

## EXPLANATION of the Obscure FIGURES.

I. *Of the figures of the Mexican Century.*

IN the wheel of the Mexican century are four figures, thirteen times repeated, to signify, as we have already mentioned, the four periods (by some authors called *indictions*), of thirteen years, of which their century consisted. The four figures are, first, the head of a rabbit, expressive of that quadruped; secondly, a reed; thirdly, a knife or the point of a lance, representing a flint stone; fourthly, a part of a building, signifying a house. The years of the century are counted by beginning at the upper twist of the serpent, and descending towards the left. The I. figure, with a small point, denotes I. rabbit; the second, with two points, signifies II. reed; the third, with three points, signifies III. flint; the fourth, with four points, IV. house; the fifth, with five points, V. rabbit; and so it continues until the twist upon the left, where the second period begins with the figure of the reed, and terminates in the lower twist; and then the third period commences.

II. *Of the figures of the year.*

The first figure is that of water, spread upon a building to denote the first month, whose name *Acabualco*, or *Atlacabualco*, signifies, the ceasing of water; because, in the month of March the winter rains cease in northern countries, where the Mexican or Toltecan calendar took its origin. They called it also *Quabuitlcua*, which signifies the budding of trees, which happens at this time in hot countries. The Tlascalans called this month *Xilomaniliztli*, or the oblation of ears of maize; because in it they offered to their gods those of the past year, to obtain prosperity to the seed, which about this time began to be sown in high grounds.

The figure of the second month, appears at first sight to be a pavilion, but we believe it is rather a human skin ill designed, to express that which is meant by the name *Tlacaxipehualitzli*, which they gave to this month, or skinning of men, on account of the barbarous rite



of skinning human victims, at the festival of the god of the goldsmiths. The Tlascalans called this month *Coailbuitl*, or general festival, and represented it by the figure of a serpent wound about a fan, and an *Ajacaxtli*. The fan and the Ajacaxtli denote the dances which were then made, and the coiled serpent signifies their generality.

The figure of the third month is that of a bird upon a lancet. The lancet signifies the spilling of blood, which was made during the nights of this month; but we do not know what bird it is, nor what it means.

The fourth month is represented by the figure of a small building, upon which appear some leaves of rushes, signifying the ceremony which they performed in this month of putting rushes, sword-grass, and other herbs, dipped in blood, which they shed in honour of their gods, over the doors of their houses.

The Tlascalans represented the third month by a lancet, to signify the same kind of penance; and the fourth month by a large lancet, to denote that during it they did still greater penance.

The figure of the fifth month is that of a human head, with a necklace under it, representing those chaplets or wreaths of crisp maize which they wore about their necks, and with which they adorned also the idol of Tezcatlipoca, from whence the month took the name of *Toxcatl*, as we have said above.

The sixth month is represented by an earthen pot or jug, signifying a certain gruel, which they took then called *Etzalli*, from which the month took the name of *Etzalqualixtli*.

The two figures of the seventh and eighth months, appear designed to signify the dances which they made then, and because the dances of the eighth month were the greatest, the figure also which represents it is greater. Near to these figures appear lancets, denoting the austerities practised preparatory to these festivals. The Tlascalans represented those two months by the heads of two lords, that of the month *Tecuilbuitontli*, or little festival of the lords, appears a young man, and that of the month *Hueitecuilbuitl*, or grand festival of the lords, seems an old man.

The figures of the ninth and tenth months, are evidently expressive of the mourning which they put on, and the lamentation which they made

made for their dead, which obtained the ninth month the name of *Miccailbuitl*, or festival of the dead, and the tenth *Hueimiccailbuitl*, or great festival of the dead; and because the mourning of the tenth month was the greater, the figure of it also is larger. The Tlascalans painted for each of these two months a skull with two bones, but the skull of the tenth was the larger.

The figure of the eleventh month is a broom, by which is signified the ceremony of sweeping the pavement of the temples, which was in this month performed by all; from whence the name *Ochpaniztli*. The Tlascalans painted a hand grasping a broom.

The figure of the twelfth and thirteenth months is that of a *parasite* plant, called by the Mexicans *pachtli*, which in this season twines about oaks, and from them the twelfth month took its name; because in the next month this plant is grown up, the figure of it is larger, and the month takes the name of *Hueipachtli*. These names, although more used by the Tlascalans, were also employed by the Mexicans; we have, however, adopted the names *Teotleco* and *Tepeilbuitl* in this history, as being more commonly used by the Mexicans.

The figure of the fourteenth month is very similar to that of the second; but we know nothing of its meaning.

The Tlascalans used to represent this month by the figure of that bird which some have called *Fiammingo*, and the Mexicans *Quecholli*, which name the Mexicans gave also to the month; because, at this time, these birds resorted to the Mexican lake.

The figure of the fifteenth month is a piece of a Mexican standard, signifying the one which was carried at the solemn procession of *Huitzilopochtli*, made in this month. The name *Panquetzalitzli*, by which it was called, signifies no more, as we have already said, than the mounting the standard.

The figure of the sixteenth is that of water upon a stair, signifying the descent of water, expressed by the name *Atemoztli*, which was given to this month, either because this is the season of rain in northern countries, or because at this time they held the festival of the gods of the mountains and water, to obtain the necessary showers.

The figure of the seventeenth month, is two or three pieces of wood tied with a cord, and a hand, which, pulling the cord forcibly, binds



the wood, denoting the constriction occasioned by the cold of this season, which is the meaning of the name *Tititl*. The Tlascalans painted two sticks cased, and firmly fixed in a plank.

The figure of the eighteenth month is the head of a quadruped upon an altar, signifying the sacrifices of animals which were made during this month to the god of fire. The Tlascalans represented it by the figure of a man holding up a child by the head; this makes an interpretation which some authors give of the name *Izcalli*, very probably, as they say that word means, *risen from the dead*, or *new creation*.

The figure of the moon, which is in the centre of the wheel, or circle of the year has been copied from a Mexican painting, from which it appears, that those ancient Indians knew well that the moon has her light from the sun.

In some wheels of the Mexican year which we have seen, after the figures of the eighteen months, there followed five large points or dots denoting the five days called Nemontemi.

### III. *Of the figures of the month.*

Authors differ greatly in opinion concerning the signification of *Cipactli*, the name of the first day. According to Boturini, it signifies a serpent; with Torquemada, the sword-fish; and with Betancourt, the tiburón. In the only wheel yet published of the Mexican month, which is that by Valades, the figure representing the first day, is almost totally similar to that of a lizard, which appears in the fourth day. As we do not know the truth, we have put the head of a tiburón, according to Betancourt.

The second day is called *Ehècatl*, or wind, and is represented by a human head blowing with the mouth.

The third day is called *Calli*, or house, represented by a small building.

The name of the fourth day is *Cuetzpahn*, or lizard, and the figure is that animal.

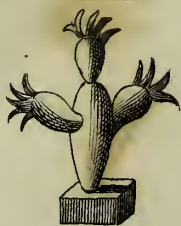
The name of the fifth day is *Coatl*, or serpent, and the figure is that animal.

The





PL. XXIII. *Mexico*



*Symbols of Cities.*

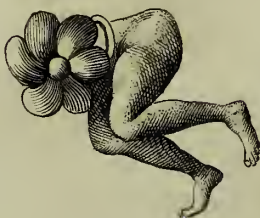
*Chalco*



*Tollantzinco* Vol. I. Page 461.



*Xochitzinco*



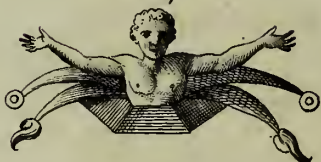
*Huaxjacac*



*Atotonilco*



*Ahuilixapan*



*Atenco*



*Tehuillojocan*



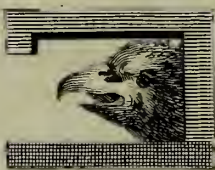
*Nepohualco*



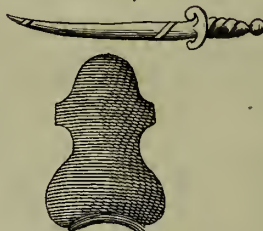
*Michmalojan*



*Zuauhtinchan*



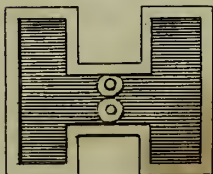
*Tlacotepec*



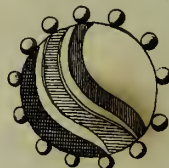
*Macuilxochitl*



*Tlachco*



*Tecozahtla*



The name of the sixth month is *Miquiztli*, that is, death, represented by a skull.

The seventh day is called *Mazatl*, or stag, represented by the head of that quadruped, as the eighth day is by that of the rabbit *Tochtli*, and so it is called.

The name of the ninth day is *Atl*, or water, and is represented by the figure of that element.

The tenth day is named *Itzcuintli*, that is, a certain Mexican quadruped, similar to a little dog, and the figure of it is that little animal.

The eleventh day was called *Ozomatli*, or ape, represented also by the figure of that animal.

The twelfth day was called *Malinalli*, the name of a certain plant of which they made brooms, and is represented by the figure of the same plant.

The thirteenth day is named *Acatl*, or reed, and is represented by a reed.

The fourteenth day is named *Ocelotl*, tyger; and the fifteenth *Quaubtli*, eagle, represented by the heads of these animals.

The sixteenth day is *Cozcaquaubtli*, the name of a Mexican bird, described in the first book of this history, and represented by the figure of it, though it is very imperfect.

The seventeenth day is *Olin tonatiuh*, or motion of the sun, represented by the figure of the same luminary.

The eighteenth day is *Tecpatl*, or flint, and the figure of it is the point of a lance, which used to be made of flint.

The nineteenth day is *Quiabuitl*, rain, and is represented by a cloud raining.

The twentieth day is *Xochitl*, flower; and the figure that of a flower.

In the centre of this wheel we have put the figure of the fifteenth month, in order to reduce it to a determined month.

#### IV. *Of the figures of cities.*

The first figure is that of an opuntia, or nopal upon a stone, the symbol of the city of *Tenochtitlan*, or Mexico. *Tenochtitlan* means  
the



the place where the opuntia is in the stone, alluding to what we have already said respecting the foundation of this great city.

The second figure is that by which they expressed a gem. The name *Chalco* means in or upon the gem (*y*).

The third figure is the hinder part of a man close to a rush plant, and the fourth is the same close to a flower, signifying the cities of *Tollantzinco* and *Xochitzincho*, the names of which signify, at the end of the place full of rushes, and at the end of the flowers, or flowery field: and almost all the names of places which have the termination in *tzinco*, and which are numerous, have a similar signification, and are represented by similar figures.

The fifth figure is a little branch of the tree *Huaxin* upon a nose, in order to represent the city of *Huaxjacac*, a name composed of *Huaxin* and *jacatl*, and means upon the point or extremity of the little tree *Huaxin*; because although *jacatl*, signifies properly the nose, it also is used to signify any other point. As *Tepejacac*, the name of two places means, upon the point of the mountain.

In the sixth figure appears an earthen pot upon three stones, as the Indians used to place it, and still do so, in order to keep it over fire, and in the mouth of the pot is the figure of water, to represent the city of *Atotonilco* (*z*), which name signifies, in hot water, or the place of the baths.

The seventh figure is that of water, in which appears a man with his arms opened, in token of rejoicing, representing the city of *Abuizapan*, called by the Spaniards Orizaba, the name of which means, in the water of pleasure, or in the chearful river.

The eighth figure is also that of water in a mouth, representing the city of *Atenco* (*a*). This name is compounded of *Atl*, water, of *Tentli*, lip, or metaphorically bank, shore, edge, &c. &c. and the preposition, or article *co*, which means *in*, so that *Atenco* means upon

(*y*) Acofta fays, that *Chalco* means, in the mouths, but the Mexican name fignifying the mouth is *Camatl*, and when they would fay, in the mouths, they exprefs it *Camac*.

(*z*) There were, and are many places, called *Atenco*, but the moft confiderable was that which appears close to Tezcucó, in our chart of the lakes of Mexico.

(*a*) On the 26th day of February of the above mentioned year, the year according to the meridian of Alexandria, which was built three centuries after, properly began. Q. Curt. lib. iv. c. 21. See La Lande Astronomie, n. 1597.







*Acamapitzin*



*Huitzilohuitl*



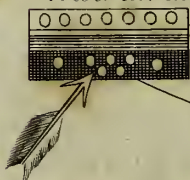
*Chimalpopoca*



*Itzcoatl*



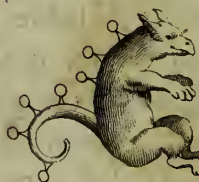
*Motezuma Ilhuicamina*



*Axajacatl*



*Tizoc*



*Ahuizotl*



*Motezuma*



*Xicojotzin*



the bank, shore, or edge of the water; and all the places which have such a name are situated upon the bank of some lake or river.

The ninth figure is that of a Mexican mirror, to represent the city of *Tehuillojocan*, which term signifies, place of the mirrors.

The tenth figure is that of a hand in the act of counting by the fingers, to represent the village of *Nepobualco*, which word signifies, the place where they count, or the place of enumeration.

The eleventh figure is that of an arm holding a fish, representing the city of *Michmalojan*, which word signifies, place where the fish are taken, or place of fishing.

The twelfth is a piece of an edifice, with the head of an eagle within it, to represent the city of *Quaubtinchan*, which signifies, house of eagles.

The thirteenth figure is that of a mountain, such as they used to paint in their pictures, and a little above a small knife, to represent the city of *Tlacotepec*, which name signifies, the cut mountain.

The fourteenth figure is that of a flower, and beneath it five of those points by which they used to express numbers from one to twenty. With such a figure they represented the place called *Macuilxochitl*, which signifies, five flowers. This name is still used to signify a day of the year; and it is probable, that the foundation of that place having been laid on such a day it obtained such a name.

The fifteenth figure is the game of football, representing the city of *Tlachco*, called by the Spaniards *Tasco*, which name signifies the place where they played at this game. Those two small round figures in the middle are two mill-stones, pierced in the center, which were used in that game. There were at least two cities or villages of this name.

The figure of the sixteenth, represents the place of *Tecotzaubtla*, signifying the place abounding with ochre.

#### V. Of the figures of the Mexican kings.

These figures are not portraits of the kings, but symbols of their names. In all of them appears a head, crowned in the Mexican style, and each has its mark to shew the name of the king represented by it.

*Acamapitzin*, the name of the first king of Mexico, signifies, he who has reeds in his fist, which also appears in the figure.

*Huitzilibuitl*, the name of the second king signifies, feather of the little flower-sucking bird; and therefore the head of that little bird is represented, though imperfectly, with a feather in its mouth.

*Chimalpopoca*, name of the third king, means, smoaking shield, which is represented in his figure.

*Itzcoatl*, name of the fourth king, means, serpent of itzli, or armed with lancets, or razors of the stone itzli, which is represented by the fourth figure.

*Ilhuicamina*, the surname of Montezuma I. the fifth king of Mexico, means, he who shoots into the sky, and therefore an arrow is represented shot at that figure, by which the Mexicans used to signify the sky.

*Axajacatl*, the name of the sixth king, means also a marsh-fly, and signifies the face or aspect of water, and therefore a face is represented, above which is the figure of water.

*Tizoc*, the name of the seventh king, signifies, pierced, and therefore he is represented by a perforated leg.

*Abuitzotl*, the name of the eighth king, is also that of an amphibious quadruped, mentioned in our first book, and is therefore represented by the figure of that quadruped; and to shew that this animal lives in the water, the figure of that element appears on its back and tail.

*Moteuczoma*, the name of the ninth king, means, angry lord; but we do not understand the figure of it.

The figures of the two last kings *Cuitlahuatzin* and *Quaubtemotzin*, are wanting; but we do not doubt but that that of *Quaubtemotzin*, signifies, a dropping eagle, as the name has that meaning.

#### VI. *Of the figure of the deluge, and the confusion of tongues.*

The water signifies the deluge; the human head, and the bird in the water, signify the drowning of men and animals. The ship, with a man in it, denotes the vessel in which, according to their tradition, one



one man, and one woman, were saved to preserve the human race. The figure in one corner is that of the mountain Colhuacan, near to which, according to their account, the man and the woman who were saved disembarked from the deluge. In all the Mexican paintings, in which mention is made of that mountain, it is represented by the same figure. The bird upon the tree represents the pigeon, which, as they say, communicated speech to men, as they were all born dumb after the deluge. Those rods which issue from the mouth of the pigeon towards men, are the symbols of languages. Wherever the Mexican paintings allude either to languages or words, they employ these rods. The multitude of them in one figure, signifies the multitude of those which were thus communicated. Those fifteen men, who receive the languages from the pigeon, represent so many families separated from the rest of mankind, from whom, as they account, descended the nations of Anahuac.

LETTER from Abbé Don LORENZO HERVAS, to the  
AUTHOR, upon the MEXICAN CALENDAR.

*Ab. Hervas, author of the work entitled, Idea of the Universe, having read this work in manuscript, and made some curious and learned observations on the Mexican Calendar, communicated them in the following letter, which we trust will prove acceptable to our readers.*

FROM the work of your Reverence I learn with infinite pain, how much the loss of those documents which assisted the celebrated Dr. Siguenza to form his *Ciclography*; and the Cav. Boturini to publish his *Idea of the General History of New Spain*, is to be regretted; and at the same time I am farther confirmed in my opinion, that the use of the solar year was contemporary, or, perhaps, anterior to the Deluge, as I attempt to prove in the eleventh volume of my work, in which is inserted The Extatic Journey to the Planetary World, wherein I propose some reflexions on the Mexican Calendar, which I shall here anticipate and submit to your censure.

The year and century have, from time immemorial, been regulated by the Mexicans with a degree of intelligence which does not at all correspond with their arts and sciences. In them they were certainly extremely inferior to the Greeks or Romans; but the discernment which appears in their Calendar, equals them to the most cultivated nations. Hence we ought to imagine, that this Calendar has not been the discovery of the Mexicans, but a communication from some more enlightened people; and as the last are not to be found in America, we must seek for them elsewhere, in Asia, or in Egypt. This supposition is confirmed by your affirmation; that the Mexicans had their Calendar from the Toltecas (originating from Asia), whose year, according to Boturini, was exactly adjusted by the course of the sun, more than a hundred years before the Christian era; and also from observing that other nations, namely, the Chiapanese, made use of the same Calendar with the Mexicans, without any difference but that of their symbols.

The Mexican year began upon the 26th of February, a day celebrated in the era of Nabonassar, which was fixed by the Egyptians 747 years before the Christian era; for the beginning of their month *Totb*, corresponded with the meridian of the same day. If those priests fixed also upon this day as an epoch, because it was celebrated in Egypt (*a*), we have there the Mexican Calendar agreeing with the Egyptian. But independent of this, it is certain, that the Mexican Calendar conformed greatly with the Egyptian.

On this subject Herodotus says (*b*), that the year was first regulated by the Egyptians, who gave to it twelve months, of thirty days, and added five days to every year, that the circle of the year might revolve regularly: that the principal gods of the Egyptians were twelve in number, and that each month was under the tutelage and protection of one of these gods. The Mexicans also added to every year, five days, which they called *Nemontemi*, or useless; because during these they did nothing. Plutarch says (*c*), that on such days the Egyptians celebrated the festival of the birth of their gods.

(*a*) On the 26th day of February, of the above mentioned year, the year according to the meridian of Alexandria, which was built three centuries after, properly began. Q: Curt. lib. iv. c. 21. See La Lande Astronomie, n. 1597.

(*b*) Herod. lib. ii. cap. 1. and 6.

(*c*) Plut. de Iside & Osiride.



It is certainly true, that the Mexicans divided their year into eighteen months, not into twelve like the Egyptians; but as they called the month *miztli*, or moon, as you have observed, it seems undeniable, that their ancient month had been lunar, as well as that of the Egyptians and Chinese, the Mexican month verifying that which the scriptures tell, that the month is obliged for its name to the moon. The Mexicans, it is probable, received the lunar month from their ancestors, but for certain purposes afterwards instituted another. You have affirmed in your history, upon the faith of Boturini, that the Miztecas formed their year into thirteen months, which number was sacred in the Calendar of the Mexicans, on account of their thirteen principal gods, in the same manner as the Egyptians consecrated the number twelve, on account of their twelve greater gods.

The symbols and periods of years, months, and days in the Mexican Calendar, are truly admirable. With respect to the periods it appears to me, that the period of five days might not improperly be termed their civil week, and that of thirteen their religious week. In the same manner, the period of twenty days might be called their civil month; that of twenty-six their religious month; and that of thirty, their lunar and astronomical month. In their century, it is probable, that the period of four years was civil, and that of thirteen religious. From the multiplication of these two periods they had their century, and from the duplication of their century, their age of one hundred and four years. In all those periods an art is discovered not less admirable than that of our indictions, cycles, &c. The period of civil weeks was contained exactly in their civil and astronomical month; the latter had six, the former four, and the year contained seventy-three complete weeks; in which particular our method is excelled by the Mexican; for our weeks are not contained exactly in the month, nor in the year. The period of religious weeks was contained twice in their religious month, and twenty-eight times in the year; but in the latter there remained a day over, as there is in our weeks. From the periods of thirteen days, multiplied by the twenty characters of the month, the cycle of two hundred and sixty days was produced, of which you have made mention; but as there remained a day over the twenty-eight religious weeks of the solar year, there arose another cycle of



two hundred and sixty days, in such a manner, that the Mexicans could, from the first day of every year, distinguish what year it was. The period of civil months, multiplied by the number of days, (that is eighteen by twenty), and the period of lunar months, multiplied by the number of days, (that is, twelve by thirty), give the same product, or the number three hundred and sixty; a number certainly not less memorable, and in use among the Mexicans than among the most ancient nations; and a number, which from time immemorial, has ruled in geometry and astronomy, and is of the utmost particularity on account of its relation to the circle, which is divided into three hundred and sixty parts, or degrees. In no nation of the world do we meet with any thing similar to this clear and distinct method of Calendar. From the small period of four years, multiplied by the above mentioned cycle of two hundred and sixty years, arose another admirable cycle of one thousand and forty years. The Mexicans combined the small period of four years with the period above named *week* of thirteen years; thence resulted their noted cycle or century of fifty-two years; and thus with the four figures, indicating the period of four years, they had, as we have from the dominical letters, a period, which, to say the truth, exceeded ours; as it is of twenty-eight years, and the Mexican of fifty-two; this was perpetual, and ours in Gregorian years is not so. So much variety and simplicity of periods of weeks, months, years, and cycles, cannot be unadmired; and the more so, as there is immediately discovered that particular relation which these periods have to many different ends, which Boturini points out by saying: "The Mexican Calendar was of four species; that is, natural, for agriculture; chronological, for history; ritual, for festivals; and astronomical, for the course of the stars; and the year was lunisolar." This year, if we do not put it at the end of three Mexican ages, after several calculations I am not able to find it.

Boturini determines by the Mexican paintings the year of the confusion of tongues, and the years of the creation of the world; which determination appears not to be difficult, because as the eclipses are noted in the Mexican paintings, there is not a doubt but the true epoch

(d) A luna signum dici festi . . . Mensis secundum nomen ejus est. Eccl. xliii.

of chronology may be obtained from them, as P. Souciet obtains the Chinese from the solar eclipse which he fixed in the year 2155, before the Christian era. An eclipse well circumstantiated, as P. Briga (*e*) Romagnoli proves at length, may assist us to fix the epoch of chronology in the space of twenty thousand years, and although in the Mexican paintings, all the circumstances of eclipses are not described, yet the defect of them is remedied by many eclipses which are marked there. The Mexican lords therefore, who still preserve great number of paintings, might by study of them adduce many lights to chronology.

Respecting the symbols of the Mexican months and year, they discover ideas entirely conformable with those of the ancient Egyptians. The latter distinguished, as appears from their monuments, each month or part of the zodiac, where the sun stood, with characteristical figures of that which happened in every season of the year. Therefore we see the signs of Aries, Taurus, and the two young Goats (which now are Gemini), used to mark the months of the birth of those animals; the signs of Cancer, Leo, and Virgo, with the ear of corn, for those months, in which the sun goes backward like a crab; in which there is greater heat, and in which the harvests are reaped. The sign of the Scorpion (which in the Egyptian sphere occupied the space which at present is occupied by the sign of Libra), and that of Sagittarius, in the months of virulent, or contagious distempers, and the chace; and lastly, the signs of Capricorn, Aquarius, and Piscis, in those months in which the sun begins to ascend towards others; in which it rains much, and in which there is abundant fishing. These ideas at least are similar to those which the Mexicans associated with their clime. They called their first month *Acabualco*, that is, the cessation of the waters, which began on the 26th of February, and they symbolize this month by a house, with the figure of water above it; they gave also to the same month the name of *Quabuitlebua*, that is, the moving or budding of trees. The Mexicans afterwards distinguished their first month by two names, of which the first *Acahualco*, or the cessation of the waters, did not correspond with their climate where the

(*e*) *Scientia Eclipsium ex Europa in Sinas, Pars iii. c. 2. sect. 20.*



rains came in October; but it agrees with the fields of Sennaar, and the northern climes of America, from whence their ancestors came; and from that the origin of this name appears evidently to be very ancient. The second name, that is, Quahuitlehua, or budding of the trees, agrees much with the word *Kimath*, used by Job to signify the Pleiades (*f*), which, in his time announced the spring, when the trees begin to move. The symbol of the second Mexican month was a pavilion, which indicated the great heat prevalent in Mexico in April, before the rains of May come on. The symbol of the third month was a bird which appeared at that time. The twelfth and thirteenth month had for their symbol the plant *pacalli*, which springs up and matures in these months. The symbol of the fourteenth month was expressed by a cord, and a hand which pulled it, expressive of the binding power of the cold in that month, which is January; and to this same circumstance the name Tititl, which they gave it alludes. The constellation *Kesil*, of which Job speaks to signify winter, signifies in the Arabic root (which is *Kesal*) *to be cold and asleep*, and in the text of Job it is read, “Couldst thou break the cords or ties of Kesil?”

Leaving a-part the evident conformity which the symbols and expressions of spring and winter have with those of Job, who, in my opinion, flourished a short time after the Deluge (as I say in my eleventh volume), it ought to be noted, that these symbols, which are excellent for preserving the year invariable, demonstrate the use of the intercalary days of the Mexicans; otherwise it would happen that in two centuries, the symbol of the month of cold would fall in the month of heat. Thus it is found, from the Mexican paintings, that in them the conquest of Mexico was marked in the ninth month called *Tlaxochimaco*; from thence it ought to be concluded, that the intercalary days were in use. The same deduction might be made from seeing that the Mexicans, at the entry of the Spaniards, preserved that order of months, which, according to the signification of their names, agreed with the seasons of the year, and the productions of the earth. Farther, to ascertain how the Mexicans regulated their leap years, and if their year was just, an exact examination and comparison ought to

(*f*) Job, chap. ix. v. 9. and chap. xxxviii. v. 31.



be made of some event known to us, which has been marked by them. You have, for example, fixed the death of Montezuma on the 29th of June, 1520: if in the Mexican paintings this is found in the seventh day, *Cuetzpalin*, of the seventh month, we must infer their year to be just, and that the leap years were interposed every four years; if it corresponds to the fourth day *Cipačtli*, it would be a sign that their year was just, and that the leap years were added after the century; if it should correspond with the seventh, *Oxomatli*, then it must be concluded that their leap years were put after the century, and their year was as erroneous as ours was at that time. The proposed example is grounded upon the Calendar, at the end of your second volume; this I did for the sake of perspicuity: but to make an exact calculation, it would be necessary to see that your Calendar corresponds with the first year of the Mexican century, and that the year 1520, was the fourteenth year of the century; whence the name of days would have taken a very different order from that which is proposed for more clearness.

Lastly, the symbol which you have put for the Mexican century, convinces me, that it is the same which the ancient Egyptians and Chaldeans had. In the Mexican symbol, we see the sun as it were eclipsed by the moon, and surrounded with a serpent, which makes four twists, and embraces the four periods of thirteen years. This very idea of the serpent with the sun has, from time immemorial in the world, signified the periodical or annual course of the sun. We know that in astronomy, the points where eclipses happen have, from time immemorial been called, (as P. Briga (*g*) Romagnoli has noted), the head and tail of a dragon. The Chinese, from false ideas, though conformable to this immemorial allusion, believe that at eclipses a dragon is in the act of devouring the sun. The Egyptians more particularly agree with the Mexicans; for to symbolize the sun they employed a circle, with one or two serpents; but still more the ancient Persians, among whom their *Mitras* (which was certainly the sun), was symbolized by a sun (*b*) and a serpent; and from P. Montfaucon (*i*), we are

(*g*) Vol. cited, p. 4. Inv. iii. c. 2.

(*b*) See Banier *Mythylogie*, vol. ii. book iv. cap. iv. vol. iii. book vii. c. xii. Pluche, *History of the Heavens*, vol. i., c. ii. sect. 1. Goguet, *Origin of Sciences*, &c. vol. i. Dissert. 2.

(*i*) Tom. i. p. 378.

given, in his Antiquities, a monument of a serpent which surrounding the signs of the Zodiac, cuts them, by rolling itself in various modes about them. In addition to these incontestible examples, the following reflexion is most convincing. There is not a doubt that the symbol of the serpent is a thing totally arbitrary to signify the sun, with which it has no physical relation; wherefore then I ask, have so many nations dispersed over the globe, and of which some have had no reciprocal intercourse, unless in the first ages after the deluge, agreed in using one same symbol so arbitrary, and chose to express by it the same object? When we find the word *sacco* in the Hebrew, Greek, Teutonic, Latin languages, &c. it obliges us to believe that it belongs to the primitive language of men after the deluge, and when we see one same arbitrary symbol, signifying the sun and his course, used by the Mexicans, the Chinese, the ancient Egyptians, and Persians, does it not prompt us to believe the real origin of it was in the time of Noah, or the first men after the deluge? this fair conclusion is strongly confirmed by the Chiapanese Calendar (which is totally Mexican), in which the Chiapanese, according to Monsig. Nugnez de la Vega, bishop of Chiapa, in his Preface to his Synodal Constitutions, put for the first symbol or name of the first year of the century a *Votan*, nephew of him who built a wall up to heaven, and gave to men the languages which they now speak. Here is a fact connected with the Mexican Calendar, relative to the building of the tower of Babel and the confusion of tongues. Many similar reflexions are suggested by the observations and remarks which occur in your history, &c. Cesena, July 31, 1780. So far the letter of Sig. Ab. Hervas. Whatever may have been the truth respecting the use of the solar year among these first men, in which dispute I do not mean to engage, I cannot be persuaded that the Mexicans, or the Toltecas, have been indebted to any nation of the old continent for their Calendar, and their method of computing time. From whom did the Toltecas learn their age of one hundred and four years, their century of fifty-two, their year of eighteen months, their months of twenty days, their periods of thirteen years and thirteen days, their cycle of two hundred and sixty days, and in particular their thirteen intercalary days, at the end of the century, to adjust the year with the course of the sun? The Egyptians



were the greatest astronomers of those remote times, but they adopted no intercalary space to adjust the year with the annual retardation of the solar course. If the Toltecas of themselves discovered that retardation, it is not to be wondered at if they discovered other things which did not require such minute and prolix astronomical observations. Boturini, of whose testimony Ab. Hervas avails himself, says expressly upon the faith of the annals of the Toltecas, which he saw, that the ancient astronomers of that nation having observed in their native country Huehuetlapallan, (a northern country of America), the excess of about six hours of the solar, over the civil year which was observed among them, corrected it by the use of intercalary days, more than one hundred years before the Christian era. With respect to the conformity between the Mexicans and Egyptians, we shall treat of it in our Dissertations.

*Animadversions of the Author on the Work entitled, LETTERE AMERICANE, or American Letters.*

Some of the observations made by Ab. Hervas have also been made by the learned author of the *American Letters*, a work full of erudition, recently published in the Literary Magazine of Florence, and come to us at the time the last sheets of this volume were printing. The author, in opposing the absurd opinions of M. de Paw, from a just though imperfect idea of the culture of the Mexicans, discourses in general very intelligently of their customs, their arts, and, above all, their astronomical knowledge, explains their calendar and their cycles, and in these points compares them with the ancient Egyptians, as was done in the last century by the learned Mexican, Siguenza, to prove their conformity and the antiquity of the population of America. In the perusal of these letters, I have had the pleasure of seeing some of my own sentiments supported and explained; although the author has committed many mistakes, and shewn more acrimony against the Spanish nation than is consistent with candour and impartiality. The alteration of the Mexican names in his work, is a trespass upon all the rules of literary propriety and accuracy with respect to etymology.

In the ninth letter of the second part, where he speaks of the Mexican year, he cites Gemelli, and accuses him, though falsely, of an error. Gemelli says, that the Mexican year at the commencement of their century, began upon the 10th of April; but that every four years it anticipated one day on account of our biffextile; so that at the end of four years it began upon the 9th of that month; at the end of eight years it began upon the 8th, and so it went on anticipating every four years, one day, unto the end of the Mexican century, where by the interposition of the thirteen intercalary days, omitted in the progress of the century, the year returned to begin upon the 10th of April. This, adds the author of the Letters, is a contradiction of fact, as the year at the end of the four years should have begun upon the 11th, and not the ninth, and thus every four years it ought to have increased a day; and in such case, the correction of thirteen days after the end of fifty-two years became superfluous, or without the retrocession of a day every four years, the difference of the solar year, at the end of the cycle should have been double, that is twenty-six days.

We wonder much that an author, who appears to be a good calculator, should err in a calculation so simple and clear. The year 1506, was a secular year among the Mexicans. Let us suppose for the sake of perspicuity, that their year began as ours on the first day of January. This first year of the Mexican century, composed like ours of 365 days, ended as ours on the 31st of December, and in like manner the second year corresponding to 1507; but in 1508, the Mexican year ought to finish a day before ours; because ours being biffextile, or leap year, had 366 days, whereas the Mexican had only 365; therefore the fourth year of the Mexican century corresponding to 1509, ought to commence a day before ours, that is on the 31st of December 1508. In the same manner, the eighth year, corresponding to 1513, ought to commence on the 30th of December, 1512, for the same reason of that year having been biffextile. The twelfth year, corresponding to 1517, ought to begin on the 29th of December 1516, and so forth, unto the year 1557, the last of the Mexican century, in which the Mexican year ought to anticipate ours as many days as there were biffextile years. Thus in the 52 years of the Mexican century, there



there are thirteen biffextile; the laft year of the century, therefore, ought to anticipate ours by thirteen days, and not twenty-fix. Confequently, the interpoſition of the thirteen days to adjust the year at the end of the century with the courſe of the ſun was not ſuperfluous. So that Gemelli ſaid properly as to the anticipation of the day, although he erred in ſaying that the Mexicans began the year upon the 10th of April, as it began as we have often repeated on the 26th of February. The author of the Letters believes, that the Mexicans began their year at the vernal equinox. We are of the ſame opinion as to their aſtronomical year; but we have not ventured to affirm it as we do not know it. The ancient Spaniſh hiſtorians of Mexico were not aſtronomers, and were leſs attentive to explain in their hiſtories the progreſs of the Mexicans in ſciences than their ſuperſtitious rites. The *Mexican Cyclography*, compoſed by the great aſtronomer Siguenza, after a diligent ſtudy of the Mexican paintings, and various calculations of the eclipses and comets marked in their paintings, has not reached us.

We cannot pardon the Author of the Letters the injuſtice he does this great Mexican in his third Letter of the ſecond volume, where he ſpeaks, on the faith of Gemelli, of the pyramids of Teotihuacan. *Carlos Siguenza*, ſays that author, *imagines theſe pyramids anterior to the deluge*. This is not true; how could Siguenza imagine theſe pyramids anterior to the deluge, if he believed the population of America poſterior to the confuſion of tongues, and the firſt ſettlers deſcendants of Nephtuim, grand nephew of Noah, as Boturini attests, who ſaw ſome of the works of Siguenza? Gemelli alſo, on whoſe teſtimony the author of the Letters reſts, gives expreſs contradiction to this particular in his ſixth volume, ſecond book, and eighth chapter. “*No Indian hiſtorian, ſays this traveller, has been able to inveſtigate the time of the erection of the pyramids of America; but D. Carlos Siguenza imagined them very ancient, and built a little time after the Deluge.*” Nor has Gemelli properly explained the opinion of Siguenza; for Dr. Eguiaſa, treating in the *Biblioteca Mexicana*, of the works of Siguenza, and amongſt others of that which he wrote upon the peopling of America, ſays, that in that work he fixed the firſt peopling of the new world

*paulo*

*paulo post Babylonicam confusionem*, that is, a little after the time which Gemelli has mentioned.

With respect to some other more important points treated of in those Letters, we shall speak of them in our Dissertations, in which we shall sometimes concur, and at other times differ in opinion with the author.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.











